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THE EFFECTS OF TRANSGRESSOR AGE AND LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY ON CHILDREN'S MORAL JUDGMENTS

by

© ALICE GRACE JOOSSE

A THESIS
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Effects of Transgressor Age and Level of Responsibility on Children's Moral Judgments" submitted by Alice Grace Joosse in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Counselling Psychology.

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Date March 19, 1982

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated with love to:

my husband Jim, whose continued loving support assisted me in meeting the challenge of this task. His confidence in me was an invaluable inspiration and a source of strength during the dark hours of self doubt.

my son Paul, who grew from being an exquisitely peaceful infant into a bubbly, energetic toddler during the course of this study. The love and warmth generated by his presence was an immeasurable source of pleasure and joy throughout the sometimes trying time of "thesis writing".

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the Piagetian hypotheses which posit the following: 1) a developmental shift from objective to subjective responsibility; and 2) a developmental shift from unilateral respect for adults to mutual respect for adults and peers. These hypotheses were examined by assessing age-related changes in the ways in which children reason about and evaluate transgressive acts. More specifically the study assessed age-related changes in children's abilities to make moral distinctions between justified and unjustified transgressions. It also assessed whether children at two age levels evaluated child and adult transgressors differently.

Thirty-two second grade students and thirty-two sixth grade students were presented with two short stories about a child or an adult who stole a low priced item of merchandise either out of necessity or for purely selfish reasons. The age samples selected were assumed to be representative of Piaget's two main stages of moral development. The subjects were asked to evaluate the transgressive acts through rating scales and verbal comments. A content analysis was performed on the subjects' verbalizations throughout

the testing session. The main statistical procedures utilized to test the hypotheses were a 3-way analysis of variance and Chi-Square analyses.

The results indicated a number of findings which lend support to the Piagetian notion of a developmental transition from objective to subjective responsibility. These findings were 1) Grade two subjects judged justified and unjustified transgressions as equally reprehensible whereas Grade six subjects judged justified transgressions as less reprehensible than unjustified transgressions; 2) Grade two subjects judged justified transgressions as more reprehensible than did Grade six subjects; 3) Proportionately more sixth grade subjects than second grade subjects made reference to the belief that the moral rule about not stealing can be compromised in order to honor a higher principle such as the right to survival and 4) Proportionately more second grade subjects than sixth grade subjects referred to the possible consequences of the transgressive acts when making their evaluations.

The study also revealed several findings which call into question the validity of the Piagetian notion of a developmental transition from unilateral

respect for adults to mutual respect for adults and peers. These findings were 1) Second grade subjects did not judge child transgressors as more reprehensible than adult transgressors and 2) Second grade subjects' judgments of adult transgressors were not less negative than sixth grade subjects' judgments of adult transgressors.

Implications for education and suggestions for further research were discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Psychological Study of Morality

While mankind has long been interested in the nature of morality, the psychological study of morality has been a rather recent phenomenon. Social scientists have traditionally felt more comfortable leaving discussions of morality up to philosophers or theologians who were considered more able to define and explain nebulous concepts such as virtue, responsibility and justice. Early exceptions to this scientific bias away from values can be found in the work of psychologists such as Jean Piaget and Gordon Allport. Piaget investigated moral development in the 1920's and Allport discussed issues such as prejudice, the psychology of religion and the nature of attitudes and morality in the 1930's and 1940's. The work of both of these men was left virtually ignored until recent years when the study of morality became more acceptable within psychological circles. Hartshorne and May (1928-30) pioneered the research into the relationship between various forms of moral conduct. Their studies were widely criticized, mainly on methodological grounds. These criticisms made evident the serious obstacles involved in properly researching morality and perhaps discouraged further research into the area.

Recent societal changes and new developments within the fields of education and psychology have given the psychological study of morality a new sense of legitimacy. The Civil Rights' Movement, the Vietnam War, the student protests of the 1960's, the Women's Movement, the development of nuclear technology and issues such as drug usage, ecology, homosexuality and abortion have brought moral concerns to the fore in the public mind (Hersh, Miller, and Fielding, 1980; Rest, 1979).

The heightened public awareness of moral issues has resulted in increased demands for moral education programs in the schools. In response to these demands, curriculum specialists, philosophers and psychologists have developed a variety of models of moral education some of which include rationale building, consideration, values clarification, values analysis, cognitive moral development and social action (Hersh, Miller, and Fielding, 1980).

Two recent developments within the field of psychology have also contributed to the proliferation of research into moral development. First, the emergence of humanistic psychological theories has produced an atmosphere favorable to the study of issues such as morality. Abraham Maslow, a major proponent of the humanistic school of psychology, believed that in order to truly understand man as an integrated wholistic being, one would have to study all aspects of the human experience. Maslow maintained that psychologists should include the study of man's religion, poetry, values, philosophy and art in their research because behavior could not be understood apart from feelings, desires, aspirations and values. Thus through the work of humanists such as Maslow, the field of psychology matured to the point where it became willing to acknowledge and address the questions about values and morality inherent in the study of man.

A second recent development within the field of psychology which stimulated research into morality and moral development was the widespread acceptance of the cognitive developmental theory of human development. The two theories of human development which directed much of the psychological research prior to the 1960's tended to equate moral development with socialization. Both the psychoanalytic and learning theories agreed with the notion that optimal moral development is achieved when a person conforms to the rules of society (Lerner, 1976).

Cognitive developmentalists did much to broaden this narrow conception of moral development. Jean Piaget, the founder of this new theory, contended that a person's perception of reality is cognitively constructed. Therefore, inner cognitive processes such as how people perceive, organize and interpret events became important issues to be researched. Psychological research was no longer limited to the study of observable behaviors. With the new emphasis on exploring inner cognitive processes, it became legitimate for psychologists to study how people reason about and evaluate moral questions.

Piaget posited the existence of basic cognitive structures which are common to all persons and which evolve in a developmental progression from the conceptually primitive to the conceptually complex. In his major work The Moral Judgment of the Child, first published in 1932, he led psychologists in identifying the basic logical structures underlying childrens' moral judgments. According to Piaget, if one could identify a number of specific features in a particular child's moral thinking one could make inferences about the child's level of moral development. The present study focused upon a reexamination of two of the Piagetian theoretical constructs concerning moral development.

Significance of the Problem

The previous section of this chapter demonstrated that moral development and moral education are important contemporary issues within psychological and educational circles. Although the Piagetian view of moral development has been the major shaping force in the research of moral judgment making, several basic Piagetian constructs have received only the cursory attention of investigators. The present study has theoretical significance in that it attempts to fill in the gaps of the research by testing the validity of several of these notions which have previously been largely ignored.

In order to design meaningful moral education programs, it is important to understand the ethical world of the growing child. This entails learning about the child's attitude towards parents, other children, teachers, school, rules and standards of social behavior. Moreover, it is also crucial to know what changes occur in the moral perspective of the child as he matures cognitively and gains new life experiences. The present study has practical significance in that it attempts to provide psychologists and educators with a clearer picture of how children at two different age levels perceive and evaluate certain moral issues. The findings of the present study will have implications for the design and implementation of moral education programs.

Nature of the Problem

Piaget (1948) delineated two major levels of moral development. He hypothesized that the moral reasoning of children between the ages of four and nine or ten is qualitatively different from that of children above the age of ten. The present study examines several of Piaget's notions concerning how children in these two age groups differ in their moral reasoning.

Piaget (1948) hypothesized that children under the age of nine base their moral judgments on objective responsibility conceptions. That is, in evaluating the naughtiness of a particular act, they consider only the external obvious characteristics of the act such as its consequences or the amount of damage incurred. Piaget contended that there is an increasing emphasis on subjective responsibility with age so that by the age of nine the majority of children base their moral judgments on the internal or subjective processes in the actor such as his intentions or motives.

Piaget assessed the relative influence of objective and subjective responsibility conceptions in the moral reasoning of children by presenting subjects with pairs of stories for evaluation. These story-pairs typically contrasted an accidental act which resulted in high damage with an intended misdeed which resulted in low damage. Judgments based upon the amount of damage caused by the act were considered as evidence of the usage of objective responsibility concepts whereas judgments based on the intentionality of the actor were assumed to evidence subjective responsibility.

Most of the studies which have attempted to test Piaget's notions of objective and subjective responsibility have employed the Piagetian research paradigm or a modification of it. The majority of these studies have followed the Piagetian lead by also assessing the ability of children at various age levels to make moral distinctions between intentional and accidental acts of harm (Keasey, 1977a). The data yielded by these studies generally lends support to Piaget's hypothesis regarding the developmental shift from objective to subjective responsibility.

Several recent studies (Berg-Cross, 1975; Buchanan and Thompson, 1973; Gutkin, 1972; Hebble, 1971; and

Imamoglu, 1975) report findings which suggest that the transition from the objective responsibility stage to the subjective responsibility stage is gradual in nature. That is, between pure consequence based moral judgment making and pure intention based moral judgment making is a stage in which judgments are based on both consequences and intentions. A gradual increase in the weighting given to intent information is reported with increased age.

The present study reexamines the developmental transition from objective to subjective responsibility from a slightly different perspective. Rather than reexamining the ability of children to distinguish accidental from intentional acts of harm, the present study examines the ability of children to distinguish differentially motivated intentional acts of harm. More specifically the present study examines the ability of children at two age levels to distinguish justified from unjustified transgressions. The ability to make this type of distinction also evidences subjective responsibility in that it necessitates consideration of the transgressor's subjective motive for acting.

Since Piagetian theory does not specifically address the development of the ability to distinguish justified from unjustified transgressions, the present study draws on Fritz Heider's views on the attribution of responsibility for further theoretical direction. Heider's conception of the objective to subjective responsibility transition is more conceptually refined than Piaget's in that it differentiates awareness of intentionality (accidental/intentional distinction) from awareness of motive (justifiable/unjustifiable distinction). Thus Heider's theory provides a clearer conceptual framework for understanding the moral distinctions between justified and unjustified transgressions.

Only a small number of researchers have examined the ability of children at various ages to distinguish intentional transgressions which can be justified from intentional transgressions which lack justification. A number of these studies report that children below the age of nine are able to base their judgments on whether or not the transgression is justified or unjustified (Darley, Klosson and Zanna, 1978; Leahy, 1979; Rule, Nesdale and McAra, 1974; Rule and Duker, 1973; Shaw and Sulzer, 1964). However, several studies (Ferguson and Rule, 1980; Rule and Duker, 1973) also show that children below the age of nine also qualify their judgments on the basis of the objective outcome of the act whereas children over the age of nine do not do so. That is, the research demonstrates that younger children are more likely to view the amount of damage caused by a transgressive act, the amount of punishment administered to the transgressor and/or the particular label of the transgressive act (i.e. 'lying' or 'stealing') as factors which lessen or increase moral culpability whereas older children are more likely to ignore these factors and base their moral judgments on the motives of the transgressor and the circumstances surrounding the transgressive act. Thus it seems that the ability to distinguish justified from unjustified transgressions develops in much the same manner as the ability to distinguish accidental from intentional acts of harm.

In summary, the first concern of the present study was to examine the developmental shift from objective to subjective responsibility by assessing the ability of children at two age levels to differentiate justified from unjustified transgressions. In contrast to the previous studies, the transgressive acts which were judged in the present study were all acts of theft.

Another Piagetian notion which was investigated in this study was that of the young child's unilateral respect for adults. Piaget proposed that the general orientation of young children to objective responsibility is grounded in an attitude of heteronomous respect towards adults and their moral commandments. Because the adult is viewed as an omnipotent, god-like being, his conduct and commands are accepted as absolute and as the basis of morality. Piaget suggested that due to increased cognitive maturity (i.e. the newly acquired ability to view situations from anothers' perspective), increased peer group cooperation and decreased adult constraint, children over ten reject the notion of the omnipotent adult.

Researchers who have investigated this notion (Peterson, Peterson and Finley, 1974; Rybash, Sewall, Roodin and Sullivan, 1975; Suls and Kalle, 1978; and Dituri, 1977) have generally assumed that if young children do in fact view the adult as omnipotent and incapable of doing wrong, they should perceive adult transgressors as less blameworthy than child transgressors. Therefore, almost all of these studies have examined the notion of unilateral respect for adults by studying the effects of the age of the transgressor on the moral judgments of children at various ages. That these studies have yielded contradictory and inconclusive findings may be related to methodological problems and conceptual ambiguity. These studies have typically failed to control for a number of potentially confounding factors such as story content, sex of the transgressor, level of responsibility and outcome severity. The present study reexamined the notion of unilateral respect for adults by studying the effects of age of the transgressor on the moral judgments of children at two age levels. In contrast to the earlier research on this topic, the present study attempted to control for the previously mentioned potentially confounding factors. Therefore, the second problem considered by the present study was whether or not transgressor age differentially affects the moral evaluations of children at various ages.

Purpose of the Present Study

The general aim of the present study was to reexamine the Piagetian hypotheses which posit the following: 1) the developmental shift from objective to subjective responsibility; and 2) the developmental shift from unilateral respect for adults to mutual respect for adults and peers. The validity of the aforementioned Piagetian hypotheses was examined by assessing age-related changes in the ways in which children reason about and evaluate transgressive acts.

The first major objective of the study was to assess age-related changes in the child's ability to make moral distinctions between justified and unjustified transgressions. The second major objective was to determine whether or not children at two age levels evaluate child and adult transgressors differently.

Thirty-two second grade students and thirty-two sixth grade students were presented with two short stories about a child or an adult who stole a low priced item of merchandise either out of necessity or for purely selfish reasons. The age samples selected were assumed to be representative of Piaget's two main stages of moral development. The subjects were asked to evaluate the transgressive acts in a variety of ways. Explanations for the evaluations were solicited.

Overall Plan of the Study

The foregoing sections of this chapter have discussed the background to the psychological study of morality, the nature and significance of the problem to be studied and the specific purposes of the present study. A review of the research and theory related to the questions under investigation will be presented in Chapter II. Chapter III will describe in detail the design and procedure of the study. Chapter IV will highlight the results of the study including an analysis and interpretation of the data. Chapter V will consist of a summary of the findings, implications and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE RELATED THEORY AND RESEARCH

Overview

The issue of moral development has received the attention of many prominent psychologists from the psychoanalytic, behavioristic and cognitive developmental schools of psychology. Because each of these major theoretical orientations hold rather divergent viewpoints with regards to the nature of the moral development process, they have each affected the scope and direction of contemporary moral psychology in very unique ways. The first major section of this chapter will present an overview of the main theoretical orientations to the issue of moral development. Since the present study focuses upon an examination of several major tenets of the cognitive developmental theory of Jean Piaget, special attention will be given to comparing each theory reviewed with the Piagetian theory. A discussion of the similarities and differences between each of the major theories will be presented. This discussion will help to clarify the theoretical context of the present study.

The next major section of this chapter will present a review of the research which has examined the effects of variables such as age, sex, intelligence, socioeconomic status and culture on moral judgment making. This review is relevant to the present study in that it gives direction as to which factors should be controlled for in any investigation of moral judgment making.

The research directly related to the Piagetian hypotheses being examined in the present study will be reviewed next. The chapter will close with a summary of the main findings of the pertinent research and a discussion of how these findings relate to the focus and aims of the present study. The summary of the relevant research will be used to generate the hypotheses to be tested in the present study.

A Review of the Major Theoretical Approaches to the Issue of Moral Development

The Work of Freud

The Freudian view of moral development stems from a modified form of the philosophical doctrine of "original sin" (Hoffman, 1970). Freud viewed the young child as totally egocentric and completely lacking in any type of moral sense. Up till the age of one and one-half, the child perceived the world as part of himself and as existing solely for his own pleasure. While the "id" is dominant, self-gratification is the only criterion of judgment for the child.

As the child begins to perceive himself as separate from his environment he becomes fearful of the potential loss of parental love and protection. Thus to ensure satisfaction of the need for security, the child will begin to negate self-gratification when it conflicts with parental expectations. At this time the child does not yet have an internalized moral code and therefore he does not yet exhibit guilt feelings when sanctions are broken.

Freud contended that the process of moral development in males beyond the age of three differed somewhat from that of females of the same age level because of the structural differences in their genitalia (Lerner, 1976). According to Freud, young boys between the ages of three and five experience a complex of emotional reactions termed an Oedipal complex. The Oedipal complex consists of incestuous feelings toward the mother and antagonistic feelings toward the perceived rival, the father. Castration anxiety develops when the boy comes to fear that his incestuous desires for his mother will evoke a severe punishment response in his father. The overwhelming fear of castration causes the boy to abandon his sexual feelings for his mother and identify with his father. Identification with the father results in the formation of the structure of personality termed the superego. The superego is composed of the ego-ideal, or the boy's view of the perfect man, and the conscience, the internalization of society's ethics, standards and morals (Lerner, 1976).

According to Freud, a somewhat analogous development occurs in young girls. Freud posited that the young girl develops incestuous feelings for her father and therefore fears the punishment of her mother. Since the girl is aware that she has no penis, she feels that in a sense she has already been punished and deprived and therefore she experiences "penis envy". In much the same way as castration anxiety causes the boy to resolve his Oedipal complex, penis envy causes the girl to resolve her Oedipal complex. Thus the girl comes to identify with and model herself after the mother. Just as for the boy, this process results in the formation of the superego which is composed of the ego-ideal, or the ideal mother-figure and the conscience. Freud, however, believed that women never attain full superego development because of their failure to experience castration anxiety. Their conscience remains incomplete and never become as morally developed as males (Lerner, 1976).

Freud believed that at approximately the age of five, after the completion of the phallic stage of psychosexual development, most children have acquired internal sanctions for their behavior. At this time children evidence anxiety and guilt when rules are broken.

Formation of the ego-ideal and the conscience continues throughout the child's growing years. Authority figures other than the parents assist in the socialization process. Freud (1962) elaborates:

> As a child grows up, the role of father is carried on by teachers and others in authority; their injunctions and prohibitions remain powerful in the ego-ideal and continue, in the form of conscience, to exercise the moral censorship. The tension between the demands of conscience and the actual performances of the ego is experienced as a sense of guilt. Social feelings rest on identification with other people, on the basis of having the same ego-ideal (p. 27).

According to Freud, the height of moral growth is achieved when the conscious intellect or the ego dominates the unconscious id and superego. The morally mature person, while being cognizant of his own needs and limitations freely chooses to behave in accord with societal rules and standards (Freud, 1962).

The research generated by Freud's theory has concentrated on the study of guilt in transgression. Evidence of guilt, i.e. of self-punitive and self-critical reactions, has generally been interpreted as an indicator of internalized moral standards and superego development. Since this line of research is not pertinent to the present study, these studies will not be reviewed here. The reader is referred to Kohlberg (1963) for a review of this topic.

Moral Development According to the Behavioristic Learning Theorists

The view of moral development presented by the behavioristic learning theorists is based to some extent on the tabula rasa philosophical doctrine (Hoffman, 1970). These theorists view the infant as neither perverse nor pure but as a being who can be molded and shaped in either direction.

Moral learning is similar to other learning in that it occurs through principles of reinforcement. Thus moral development occurs when parents and other significant adults positively reinforce good behaviors and punish or ignore bad behaviors. Positive reinforcement of good behaviors cause them to become conditioned habitual responses which can be generalized to new situations. Punishment results in anxiety and the inhibition of the undesired response. Thus moral behavior and the "conscience" is nothing more than learned stimulus response associations formed by external rewards and punishments (Eysenck, 1960; and Sears, 1957).

Aronfreed (1969) posited that cultural standards and rules could also be internalized through observational learning. That is, the child learns by imitating social models and by observing the consequences of the behaviors of others.

The behavioristic learning theorists have typically investigated moral development by studying the relationship of child-rearing practices to various behavioral indices of conscience such as resistance to temptation. A review of this body of research is not relevant to the study as hand and therefore will not be presented in this paper. The reader is referred to Kohlberg (1963) for a review of this research.

Although the Freudian and the behaviorist theories present considerably divergent explanations of how a person develops morally, their views on indicators or evidence of moral development are similar. Both theoretical perspectives describe the morally developed person as one who conforms behaviorally to the ethical standards and sanctions of society. Also, both perspectives emphasize the importance of adult intervention in terms of socialization techniques to ensure a proper rate and level of moral development.

The next two sections of this chapter introduce a different theoretical perspective, the cognitive developmental point of view. A discussion of the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg will reveal that the cognitive developmentalists assess moral development in terms of how people reason about and judge moral issues rather than how they behave.

The Cognitive Developmental Approach of Jean Piaget

Piagetian theory finds its roots in the philosophy of Rousseau, an advocate of the doctrine of innate purity. The adult, from this perspective, is primarily a corrupting rather than a morally uplifting influence in the young child's development (Hoffman, 1970). According to Piaget, the impetus for moral development originates from within the child rather than from adult socializing agents. In this respect, Piagetian theory diverges sharply from the psychoanalytic and learning theories.

Piaget introduced the cognitive developmental approach to the study of morality. Fundamental to this approach is the notion that a person's perception of reality is cognitively constructed. Piaget viewed the child as a type of philosopher whose primary concern was assigning structure and organization to his world. The child's moral philosophy was internally logical because it was based on cognitive structures or rules for processing information. It provided the child with a consistent means of interpreting experiences and forming moral judgments.

A second basic principle of the cognitive developmental approach is the notion that the basic cognitive structures that are common to all persons evolve in a developmental progression from the conceptually simple to the conceptually complex (Rest, 1979). Piaget identified two distinct moral philosophies or levels of moral development in childhood. Disequilibrium caused by the interaction of increased cognitive maturity and broadened social experience stimulates the progression from the lower to the higher level of moral development.

Piaget's account of moral development is organismic in that he viewed the child as an active participant in his own moral development. Both the action of the child on the environment as well as the action of the environment on the child creates the disequilibrium which compels the child to revise his moral philosophy. In other words, when the existing cognitive structures no longer maintain the equilibrium between the child and the environment, a new higher order cognitive structure evolves.

Piaget viewed the individual's respect for rules and his sense of justice as the heart of morality. Piaget (1948) stated that "all morality consists of a system of rules and the essence of all morality is to be sought for in the respect which the individual acquires for these rules (p. 1)." Piaget described the individual's sense of justice in terms of his concern for reciprocity and equality in human relations.

Piaget developed his views on childhood morality by initially studying the attitudes of Genevan children towards the source, fairness and alterability of the rules of their childhood game of marbles.

To further explore the child's thoughts on specific moral issues such as stealing, lying, punishment, responsibility and justice, Piaget turned to a less naturalistic method of investigation. He presented children with hypothetical situations and then asked them to evaluate the actions of the story characters.

On the basis of his findings, Piaget proposed the existence of two broad levels of moral development preceded by an amoral stage. Piaget viewed the child who had not yet attained the first level of moral development as amoral because of his totally egocentric perspective. The amoral child who is generally younger than four perceives the world as existing only to satisfy his personal interests and desires.

Between the ages of four and nine the child attains the first level of moral development. According to Piaget, the child at this level has a unilateral respect for adults which causes him to view adult rules as sacred and unchangeable. This heteronomous emotional attitude is the result of two cognitive deficits: egocentrism and realism. Egocentrism refers to the child's tendency to confuse his own perspective with that of others. Because of this deficit, the child is incapable of realizing that moral values are relative to various persons or ends. Realism, the second cognitive deficit refers to the child's inability to distinguish subjective phenomena from objective things. Thus rules are viewed as fixed, external things rather than as psychosocial expectations (Kohlberg, 1963).

The interaction of heteronomous respect for adults and cognitive realism results in a particular moral philosophy termed moral realism. Observable aspects of moral realism include: 1) objective responsibility - evaluation of an act in terms of its exact conformity to the rule and its physical consequences rather than in terms of its intent; 2) inflexibility or unchangeability of rules; 3) absolutes of value - the child believes that everyone shares the same judgment of an act; 4) moral wrongness defined by sanctions - the child believes that because an act is punished it must be wrong; and 5) duty defined as obedience to authority. The moral realist's sense of justice is characterized by: 1) ignoring of reciprocity in defining obligations; 2) expiative justice - belief in severe punishment which is arbitrary in that it is not related to the crime; 3) immanent justice - the belief that physical accidents or misfortunes which follow a misdeed are willed by God, fate, or some inanimate object; 4) belief in collective responsibility; 5) punishment by authority; 6) favoritism by authority in distributing goods (Kohlberg, 1963).

Increased peer group interaction and cooperation, decreased adult constraint, and the qualitative intellectual changes associated with increased age cause a state of disequilibrium in the child's moral outlook. This disequilibrium compels the child to reassess and change the cognitive structures underlying his moral philosophy. Thus a more advanced qualitatively different level of moral development marked by mutual respect towards others and an autonomous regard for rules emerges. At this level termed moral subjectivity, rules are no longer viewed as fixed and eternal but are regarded as the product of group cooperation. The child at this level also gains the cognitive ability to differentiate his own perspective from that of others. Observable characteristics of the level of moral subjectivity include: 1) intentionalism; 2) flexibility or changeability of rules; 3) relativism of values - the realization that not all people share the same perspective on the judgment of an act; 4) moral judgments made independantly of sanctions; 5) duty being defined in terms of conformity and expectations of peers or equals.

The autonomous child's sense of justice is characterized by the following aspects: 1) defining obligation in terms of contractual rights; 2) restitutive justice - belief in restitution to the victim; 3) naturalistic causality; 4) belief in individual responsibility; 5) belief in punishment by reciprocal retaliation from the victim; 6) impartiality or distributive justice (Kohlberg, 1963).

Much of the research generated by Piagetian theory will be reviewed in a later section of this chapter.

A comparison of the Piagetian view of moral development with that of the Freudian and the learning theorists reveals some commonalities as well as differences.

Though their philosophical starting points are different, both Freud and Piaget view the child from infancy up to the age of three or four as amoral and totally egocentric. Conscience or internalized principles are at this point in time still non-existent. Freud posited that the amoral stage ends with the development of the superego whereas Piaget accounted for the acquisition of morality with the emergence of a new philosophical outlook termed moral realism.

Both theorists maintained that the child at this first level of moral development internalizes principles or rules put forth by authority figures. Both theorists perceive the child at this level as looking to others for norms for his own actions. Social conformity and adherence to external rules are of prime importance in the child's thinking.

The second stage of moral development according to Freud and Piaget describes the height of moral development. Once a person has developed a healthy ego and has reached the stage of moral subjectivity, he uses reason and internalized principles originating out of his own experience to make moral judgments.

The Freudian, Piagetian and behavioristic theories present conflicting explanations as to what factors cause moral development to occur. Freud attributes moral growth to the continual movement of the libido; Piaget attributes it to the disequilibrium caused by cognitive growth and increased social experience; and the behaviorists view positive and negative reinforcement as the prime shapers of morality.

The Freudian and behavioristic positions agree that the morally developed person is one who conforms behaviorally to the ethical standards and sanctions of society. Piagetian theory diverges from this position in that it focuses on the structure of moral reasoning rather than the content of overt behavioral responses.

Also, in contrast to the Freudian and behavioristic perspectives, Piaget viewed the impetus for moral development as originating from within the child as a result of child-child interactions rather than from adult socializing agents. While Piaget emphasizes the importance of peer interaction, he does not negate the possible role of child-rearing practices as a help or a hindrance to moral development. According to Piaget, authoritarian approaches help solidify the young child's natural orientation toward heteronomy, whereas egalitarian child-rearing practices increase the chances of the emergence of moral autonomy. Piaget (1948) states:

> In order to remove all traces of moral realism one must place oneself on the child's own level, and give him a feeling of equality by laying stress on one's own obligations and one's own deficiencies. In the sphere of clumsiness and of untidiness in general (putting away toys, personal cleanliness, etc.), in short in all the multifarious obligations that are so secondary for moral theory but so all important in daily life (perhaps nine-tenths of the commands given to children relate to these material questions) it is quite easy to draw attention to one's own needs, one's own blunders, and to point out their consequences, thus creating an atmosphere of mutual help and understanding. In this way the child will find himself in

> the presence, not of a system of commands requiring ritualistic and external obedience, but of a system of social relations such that everyone does his best to obey the same obligations, and does so out of mutual respect (p. 133-134).

The next section of this chapter will present a summary of Kohlberg's moral developmental model. Since Kohlberg's theory originates out of Piaget's theory, it can be compared to the Freudian and learning theories in virtually the same manner as was just done with the Piagetian theory. Rather than repeating this information, the next section of this chapter will close with a discussion of how Piaget's and Kohlberg's theories differ.

Kohlberg's Extension of Piagetian Theory

Kohlberg (1967, 1969) accepted the basic cognitive developmental theoretical stance, but deviated to a certain extent from the substance of Piagetian theory.

While Piaget had focused his research on the moral judgments of children between the ages of six and eleven, Kohlberg studied the thinking of subjects up till the age of sixteen. He presented his subjects with hypothetical moral dilemmas in which conformity to laws, rules or the commands of an authority figure conflicted with meeting the needs or ensuring the well-being of other persons. By asking his subjects to resolve this dilemma, Kohlberg placed them in a conflict situation. His main purpose in doing so was to determine how the subjects reasoned about, defined and resolved the dilemma rather than which particular action alternative they selected.

Kohlberg found that although subjects at various ages might make the same moral choice response, the reasoning behind their responses was often qualitatively different. He found it necessary to posit six distinct stages of moral development in order to adequately describe the kinds of reasoning produced by the subjects. Furthermore, Kohlberg postulated that these six stages which could be divided into three levels, formed a universal, invariant sequence of development.

Table 1 depicts Kohlberg's levels and stages of moral development.

Much of the research generated by Kohlberg's theory has attempted to examine the stage properties of moral judgment making. Some of this research which is relevant to the present study will be reviewed in a later section of this paper. See Rest (1979)

TABLE 1

KOHLBERG'S LEVELS AND STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Level I	Moral value resides in external, quasi-physical happenings, in bad acts, or in quasi-physical needs rather than in persons and standards. Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation. Egocentric deference to superior power or prestige,or a trouble avoiding set. Objective responsibility. Stage 2: Naively egoistic orientation. Right action is that instrumentally satisfying the self's needs and occasionally others'. Awareness of relativism of value to each actor's needs and perspective. Naive egalitarianism and orientation to exchange and reciprocity.
Level II	Moral value resides in performing good or right roles, in maintaining the conventional order and the expectancies of others. Stage 3: Good-boy orientation. Orientation to approval and to pleasing and helping others. Conformity to stereotypical images of majority or natural role behaviour, and judgment by intentions. Stage 4: Authority and social-order maintaining orientation. Orientation to 'doing duty' and to showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake. Regard for earned expectations of others.
Level III	Moral value resides in conformity by the self to shared or shareable standards, rights or duties.

Table 1 - Continued

	Stage 5: Contractual legalistic orientation. Recognition of an arbitrary element or starting point in rules or expectations for the sake of agreement. Duty defined in terms of contract, general avoidance of violation of the will or rights of others, and majority will and welfare. Stage 6: Conscience or principle orientation. Orientation not only to actually ordained social rules but to principles of choice involving appeal to logical universality and consistency. Orientation to conscience as a directing agent and to mutual respect and trust.

Source: Kohlberg, 1967 (p. 171).

for a comprehensive review of this body of research.

Kohlberg's stage 1 resembles Piaget's heteronomous stage in that moral culpability is based on the presence or absence of obedience and punishment. The two theorists do however provide different theoretical explanations for the motivational basis of the child's punishment and obedience orientation. Piaget maintained that the child has a deep respect for adult authority and because he feels incapable of making independant judgments, he relies on adult rules and commands to demarcate right from wrong. The child focuses on punishment only because it indicates the parental view of the severity of the transgression. Kohlberg dismisses the notion of the young child's deep unilateral respect for adults. He maintains that young children merely concede to adult sanctions because they recognize that adults are more powerful than children. That the young child defines wrong in terms of the punitive consequences of an act only reflects a self-centered desire to avoid punishment rather than respect for adult sanctions. The type of responses which according to Piaget indicated unilateral respect for adults are interpreted by Kohlberg as merely indicating cognitive immaturity and a complete lack of any concept of rules. In Kohlberg's model, elements of heteronomous respect for authority and rules become prominent at the third and fourth stages.

Kohlberg's stage 2 is similar to Piaget's autonomous stage particularly with regards to relativism of value. The child begins to realize that not all people share the same perspective on the judgment of an act. Naive conceptions of reciprocity and exchange are also noted. That is, the child begins to believe it is possible to ignore the label or physical consequences of an act if the act is instrumental in serving a need. The child gains the ability to consider the needs of self and sometimes the needs of significant others when making a moral judgment.

In spite of these similarities, it is evident that Piaget attributes a far higher level of moral development to children of the ten to twelve year old age group than does Kohlberg. Kohlberg maintains that moral judgment making at his stage 2 still occurs in reference to external and physical events, objects or needs rather than in terms of social conventions or internal standards. Kohlberg postulated that full autonomous morality (as defined by Piaget) is only achieved as the child progresses through the last three stages of his moral developmental model.

Kohlberg also differs from Piaget in that he views participation in all groups - even those which include adults - as an impetus for moral growth. Close interaction with adults provides the child with the opportunity of taking the perspective of the authority figure. This experience gives the child a greater appreciation for the role of authority in the maintenance of the social order.

In summary, considerable overlap between Piaget's two stages of moral development and Kohlberg's six stages was noted. Aspects of Piaget's heteronomy can be found in Kohlbergs stages one through four and aspects of Piaget's autonomy are evident in Kohlberg's stages two through six (Hoffman, 1970). Several other theoretical differences were noted. Piaget posited the notion of unilateral respect for adults in the heteronomous stage whereas Kohlberg dismissed this notion. Also, Kohlberg recognized adult-child interactions as an important impetus for moral growth whereas Piaget viewed child-child interactions as the sole catalyst for moral development.

The purpose of the next section of this chapter is to present an overview of Heider's (1958) views on the attribution of responsibility, a process fundamental to moral judgment making. Heider's levels of responsibility will be compared to Piaget's levels of moral development. Heider's theory will be discussed because it makes several conceptual distinctions not evident in Piagetian theory. Of particular relevance to the present study is Heider's distinction between justifiable and purposeful transgressions, a distinction alluded to by Piaget, but not clearly defined by him.

Heider's Views on the Attribution of Responsibility

Concepts included in the Piagetian theory of moral development can also be found in Fritz Heider's (1958) views on the attribution of responsibility. Heider's perspective on how people attribute responsibility for events is but a part of his broader theory of naive psychology. Naive psychology professes to provide a systematic analysis of the interpersonal events that occur in everyday life. Heider analyzed phenomena such as how a person thinks and feels about other persons and how a person reacts to the behaviors of others.

Heider viewed inferring causality or, as he termed it, making a causal analysis, as fundamental to the attribution of responsibility. Heider believed that the individual engages in causal analysis for the purpose of bringing order and meaning into an otherwise chaotic world.

In a causal analysis, the cause of a particular action can be attributed to either personal or environmental causes. If the attribution is designated as personal, the observer goes on to assess whether or not the act was intentional. Where the act is deemed intentional, the observer seeks out the nature of the actor's motive. Depending on the nature of the obtained information, the observer might make judgments as to the dispositional properties or personality traits of the actor. In any event, once a person is able to explain an event in terms of the motivations and/or dispositional properties of the actor, he feels content in his understanding of why the act happened. Events which might otherwise have seemed arbitrary and unpredictable are understood through this process.

Heider postulated five possible levels of conceptualizing and attributing responsibility for an act. Heider (1958) viewed these five levels as "successive stages in which attribution to the person decreases and attribution to the environment increases (p. 113)." According to Heider, the five levels delineate the transition from a primitive mode of thinking to a higher more sophisticated mode of thinking. A description of each of Heider's five levels of responaibility will now be presented.

1) Global association. This level reflects a very primitive mode of thinking in that the person is held responsible for any effect that is in any way connected with him. For example, a person may be held responsible for the misdeeds of his ancestors. This level corresponds to the Piagetian notion of collective responsibility in the heteronomous stage of moral development.

2) Extended commission. At this level anything caused by the person is ascribed to him. Intentions or motives are irrelevent here. The person is judged according to the actual results of what he does. This level corresponds to the Piagetian notion of objective responsibility in the heteronomous stage of moral development.

3) Careless commission. At this level the individual is held responsible for any effect that he might have forseen. When the person's stupidity, negligence

or moral weakness cloud his ability to forsee the outcome of his actions, he is still held responsible because he should have known better.

4) Purposeful commission. Here the person is held responsible only if he intended to accomplish the action. This level corresponds to the Piagetian concept of subjective responsibility which is an observable characteristic of the moral subjectivity stage.

5) Justifiable commission. While personal causality (intention and ability) is apparent, some of the responsibility for the act is shared with the environment because the motive behind the act finds its source in the environment. Misdeeds committed under duress or necessity as opposed to those that are premeditated fall into this category (Heider, 1958).

Heider's five levels of responsibility can be viewed as an expansion and a refinement of the Piagetian conception of the objective/subjective transition. Like Piaget, Heider assumes that his levels reflect underlying cognitive processes which to some extent determine the level of sophistication at which people can attribute responsibility. Thus, Heider's levels can be viewed as falling into a developmental sequence in the same manner as do the Piagetian levels of objective and subjective responsibility.

In his research, Piaget often used stories in which he assumed he was contrasting acts of purposeful commission with acts of extended commission. Karniol (1978) demonstrates however, that Piaget often confused purposeful commission with careless commission. For example, while the first story in the following widely used story-pair (Piaget, 1948) clearly indicates extended commission, the second story could be interpreted as representing either careless or purposeful commission.

> A little boy who is called John is in his room. He is called to dinner. He goes into the dining room. But behind the door there was a chair, and on the chair there was a tray with 15 cups on it. John couldn't have known that there was all this behind the door. He goes in, the door knocks against the tray, bang go the fifteen cups and they all get broken!
>
> Once there was a little boy whose name was Henry. One day when his mother was out he tried to get some jam out of the cupboard. He climbed up on to a chair and stretched out his arm. But the jam was too high up and he couldn't reach it and have any. But while he was trying to get it he knocked over a cup. The cup fell down and broke (p. 118).

It is clear that John in the first story could not have known that a tray with fifteen cups was on a chair right behind the door. Attributing responsibility to John for the damage incurred should therefore definitely be a level two judgment. While Henry in story two did not anticipate the damage incurred, it could have been forseen. Using Heiderian criteria this story would assess recognition of the third level of responsibility or careless commission. Piaget however, assumes it assesses purposeful commission because the child's primary intent in the story is negative. The problem here is that the act of damage is accidental and therefore not directly related to the primary intent of the actor.

Heider's fifth level of responsibility appears to represent a more sophisticated level of thinking than that described in Piaget's subjective responsibility level. Heider's fourth level, the subjective responsibility level requires recognition of intentionality before the attribution of responsibility can be made. At level five however, the individual must also evaluate the different motives which might underly an intentional act. If it is found that part of the motive for the act finds its source in the environment, less responsibility is attributed to the person for part of the responsibility must be attributed to the environment.

Research pertaining to the development of the ability to distinguish purposeful commission from justifiable commission will be presented and discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Summary and Discussion

The preceding sections of this chapter have presented an overview of the main theoretical perspectives on moral development. Since the present study tests several hypotheses generated by Piagetian theory, special emphasis was placed on comparing each theory presented with the Piagetian perspective. The significant points of comparison will now be reviewed and discussed.

The main factor which distinguishes the cognitive developmental approach to moral development from that of the Freudian and behavioristic orientations involves the means of assessing moral development. Cognitive developmentalists assess moral development in terms of how people reason about and judge moral issues whereas Freudians and behaviorists view the extent to which people conform behaviorally to the ethical standards and rules of society as an indicator of moral maturity. Stated in another way, the cognitive developmentalists analyze the structure of moral reasoning whereas the Freudians and the behaviorists measure the moral content of overt behavioral responses.

The Freudian, behavioristic and cognitive developmental theories also present quite divergent explanations as to what factors cause moral development to occur. Freudians attribute moral growth to the continual movement of the libido; and the cognitive developmentalists attribute it to the disequilibrium caused by cognitive growth and increased social experience.

The different perspectives also attribute various levels of importance to the role of the adult in the moral development of the child. The Freudians and the behaviorists view the adult as extremely important in the process of moral development. Freudians believe that the development of the conscience and the superego cannot occur without the presence of a strong adult figure who admonishes the child for his wrongdoings. Learning theorists also view adults as the prime shapers of moral development because of their power as reinforcement agents.

In contrast to the positions of the Freudians and the behaviorists, the cognitive developmentalists place considerably less emphasis on the role of the adult in the moral development of the child. Piaget viewed the main impetus for moral development as originating from within the child as a result of child-child interactions. Piaget believed that while adults did not contribute to the moral development process through direct intervention, their approach to child-rearing could to a certain limited extent help or hinder moral growth. Kohlberg's stance on this issue was slightly more moderate than that of Piaget. Although he placed a heavy emphasis on the need for child-child interaction, Kohlberg also viewed adult-child interaction as an impetus for moral growth especially when it provided the child with the opportunity of taking on the perspective of an authority figure.

Several striking similarities can be noted in the stage progression proposed by the various moral development models. The theoretical positions of Freud, Piaget and Kohlberg all view the child as moving from a completely amoral stage to a level characterized by obedience to external rules and authority. The height of moral development according to all three theories is achieved when the person bases his moral evaluations on reason and internalized principles which have originated out of his own experience.

Kohlberg's theory differs from Piaget's in that it posits six distinct stages of moral reasoning as opposed to the two presented by Piaget's theory. Aspects of Piaget's heteronomous stage can be found in Kohlberg's stages one through four. Aspects of Piaget's autonomous level can be found in Kohlberg's stages two through six. Piaget's theory attributes a far higher level of moral development to children of the ten to twelve age group than does Kohlberg's theory.

The two theories also differ with respect to their views on the motivational basis of the young child's orientation to obedience and punishment. The Piagetian position is that the child focuses on punishment and obedience because of an attitude of heteronomous respect towards adults and their moral commandments. Kohlberg's theory dismisses this notion and attributes the child's punishment and obedience orientation to a realistic-hedonistic desire to avoid the shame and punishment of transgression.

Though Heider's perspective on the attribution of responsibility cannot be classified as a moral judgmental theory per se, it is relevant to the present study in that it makes several conceptual distinctions not evident in Piaget's theory. According to Heider a person may be held responsible to an outcome because of global association, extended commission, careless commission, purposeful commission or justifiable commission. Heider's global association and extended commission levels correspond with the Piagetian notion of objective responsibility. Heider's purposeful commission corresponds with the Piagetian concept of subjective responsibility. By including two new levels of responsibility (careless commission and justifiable commission) Heider's hierarchy offers both an extension and a refinement of the Piagetian conception of the objective/subjective transition.

Of particular relevance to the present study is Heider's distinction between justifiable and purposeful commission, a distinction alluded to by Piaget but not clearly defined by him. At the purposeful commission level full responsibility is attributed to the person if he intended to accomplish the action, whereas at the justifiable level, even though intentionality is evident, some of the responsibility for the act is attributed to the environment. Responsibility is shared with the environment because the motive behind the act finds its source in the environment. By proposing the distinction between purposeful commission and justifiable commission, Heider provides a sound conceptual framework from which one can investigate the child's ability to differentiate intentional transgressive acts from transgressive acts which can be justified because of extenuating circumstances.

Variables Related to Moral Judgment Making

This section presents some of the early moral development studies as well as much of the research which has attempted to replicate Piaget's findings. While many of these studies do not pertain directly to the aspects of moral development under investigation in the present study, they are relevant to the present discussion in that they present data concerning the possible effects of variables such as social class, culture, intelligence, religion, child-rearing practices, sex and age on moral judgment making. The studies will be presented in chronological order. A summary and discussion of the findings will conclude the section.

Harrower (1934) used Piaget's research methodology to examine the moral reasoning of English children of two different socioeconomic levels. He found that children who were of low socioeconomic status held views regarding punishment and cheating which were similar to those of the disadvantaged Genevan children studied by Piaget. However, even the six and seven year old children of well-to-do families responded maturely to the moral problems. Harrower concluded that either Piaget's stages were not universal or that within certain environments, stage progression could be accelerated.

Abel (1941) employed the Piagetian research paradigm in a study of the moral judgments of ninety-four mentally handicapped white girls. The chronological ages of the girls ranged from fifteen to twenty-one years whereas their mental ages, six to eleven, were equivalent to the chronological age range studied by Piaget. Abel found that while the belief in retributive punishment decreased as mental age increased, belief in immanent punishment was unaffected by mental age. The types of moral judgments made by the subjects seemed to be more influenced by their living arrangements than by their mental ages. Moral realism was much more prevalent in institutionalized girls than in the girls living in the community. Moral realism was also more prevalent in those girls who had been institutionalized for over six years as opposed to those institutionalized for less than one year. Abel explains these results in terms of the regimentation and authoritarian atmosphere present in the large custodial institutions for the mentally handicapped.

MacRae (1954) questioned 244 boys ranging in age from five to fourteen as to the degree of parental authority they experienced. Questions dealt with the extent of parental discipline and control (i.e. parental control over finishing homework or meeting curfews etc.) and the extent to which the subjects had internalized parental rules and controls. MacRae found no relationship between the type of moral judgment used by the boys and the type of parental authority they were reportedly exposed to. These findings should however be viewed with caution since the reliability of the data was dependent on the children's second hand reports of parental authority.

Havighurst and Neugarten (1955) studied the moral and emotional development of 902 American Indian children. The subjects came from six Indian tribes and ranged in age from six to eighteen years. The investigators found an increase or no change in the belief in immanent justice with age. Heteronomous attitudes towards the changeability of rules were also noted. Within three of the tribes these attitudes were maintained at all age levels whereas within the other three tribes some growth towards autonomous thinking was noted with increased age. These findings are consistent with Piaget's hypotheses concerning children in primitive societies. Piaget believed that children of primitive cultures became more rigid in their moral ideas as they grew older because of the increased moral constraint of their culture.

Jahoda (1958) investigated immanent justice in 120 West African children from Accra, Ghana. The subjects ranged in age from approximately six years to eighteen years and attended either primary or middle school. She found no significant sex differences in the subjects' responses. Also, contrary to the findings of Havighurst and Neugarten (1955) there was a decrease in the belief in immanent punishment with age. Jahoda concluded that Piaget's views about immanent justice in primitive societies rest on questionable assumptions. Jahoda's main criticism of the Piagetian view was that it utilizes simplistic, unrealistic models of what constitutes a primitive or modern society. Jahoda points out that the amount of constraint experienced by an adult member of a particular culture is difficult to measure and all other memebers of the culture may not experience equal levels of constraint. Also, many contemporary social scientists would disagree over the criteria by which one judges a society to be primitive or modern.

Delores Durkin investigated the child's concepts of justice through several studies. The first study (1959a) investigated the effects of age and intelligence on the child's acceptance of reciprocity when judging infractions other than physcial aggression (i.e. stealing and damaging property). The sample was comprised of 101 Midwestern students who were in the second, fifth or eighth grades. Durkin reports that, contrary to Piaget's findings, acceptance of reciprocity decreased with age. Also, no relationship between acceptance of reciprocity and level of intelligence was noted.

Durkin (1960) investigated possible sex differences in children's conceptions of justice. She presented 190 subjects of lower and middle class socioeconomic status with hypothetical stories involving physical or verbal aggression. There were no sex differences in children's conceptions of justice at any of the three grade levels tested.

Boehm (1962a) examined the effects of age, intelligence and socioeconomic status on moral judgment making. Two hundred and thirty-seven boys and girls between the ages of six and nine were presented with Piagetian-type stories. She found that academically gifted students showed signs of subjective responsibility sooner than children of average intelligence. Also, upper middle class children were found to be more mature than working class children. Piaget's claims for age differences in moral judgment making were substantiated.

Boehm and Nass (1962) also used Piaget's clinical method to assess the effects of age and socioeconomic status on moral judgment making. One hundred and sixty children, ages six to twelve, from working class or middle class backgrounds were assessed. The Boehm (1962a) results were not replicated. The authors attribute their findings to the fact that the working class children in the Boehm and Nass (1962) study came from 'mixed' areas rather than slum areas. The authors suggest that exposure to middle class influences may have had a morally uplifting effect on the working class children. Significant developmental differences similar to those reported by Piaget were noted between the under nine and over nine age groups. There were no significant sex differences either within age groups or within classes.

Boehm (1962b) investigated several aspects of moral judgment in 222 Brooklyn children who were attending either parochial or public schools. The subjects ranged in age from six years to nine years. The children's views regarding intentionality, independence from adults and peer reciprocity were assessed. In all areas, parochial students, regardless of socioeconomic status or intelligence, made more mature moral judgments at an earlier age than did public school children. Several observations regarding the ability to make intention-based judgments were noted. Academically gifted upper middle class children in both types of schools made more mature judgments at an earlier age than their counterparts of average intelligence or than working class children of either level of intelligence. Also, in public schools, academically gifted working class children responded more maturely than their counterparts of average intelligence. This pattern was not found in the Catholic parochial schools where differences due to levels of intelligence within the working class group favored the child of average intelligence.

Johnson (1962) investigated the reliability and construct validity of the following aspects of moral judgment: immanent justice, objective versus subjective responsibility, retribution and expiation versus restitution and reciprocity, the efficacy of severe punishment and communicable responsibility. A moral judgment test composed of questions and stories modelled after those devised by Piaget was administered to 807 Midwestern children in grades five through eleven. Johnson summarizes his findings as follows:

> The reliability of the entire moral judgment scale was approximately .60 at each age level. Correlations between moral judgment responses revealed far more positive and significant correlations than might be expected by chance. Responses within moral judgment areas (e.g. immanent justice) were nearly always positively and significantly correlated. Correlations of the number of mature responses in the various areas of moral judgment showed response tendencies in the areas of moral realism, retributive vs restitution and the efficacy of severe punishment to be rather closely related, while responses to questions involving communicable responsibility were essentially unrelated to other response tendencies (p. 353).

Johnson's data suggested the existence of a two factor model of moral judgment. The first and most comprehensive factor included the following aspects of moral judgment: moral realism versus moral subjectivity; retribution versus restitution; and expiative versus reciprocal punishment. The second factor described the notion of collective versus individual responsibility.

Whiteman and Kozier (1964) investigated the usage of intentionality concepts in the moral judgments of 173 public school children ranging in age from seven years to twelve years. Their findings indicated that the ability to make the more mature intentionality based judgments was a function of increased age and increased intelligence at each age level. Mature moral judgment was unrelated to personality characteristics as rated by teachers, sex of subject, attendance at Sunday School or membership in scouting organizations.

Kohlberg (1969) reviewed data which suggested intelligence is a requisite but not sufficient condition for achieving higher levels of moral development. He reported a curvilinear relationship between I.Q and moral maturity. A linear relationship (r=.53) was found in the below average group whereas no relationship (r=.16) was present between the two measures in the above average group, Thus, although children of below average intelligence were likely to also be below average in moral maturity, children of above average intelligence were equally likely to evidence a low or high level of moral maturity. Furthermore, since moral growth continues well into adulthood whereas general intellectual maturity does not, the correlation between the two measures declined with age. Kohlberg concluded that while I.Q. was an important factor in moral development, other factors such as social experience were of equal or greater importance.

Armsby (1971) presented Catholic and public school children (240 in total) ranging in age from six years to ten years with a battery of story-pairs devised to measure the usage of intentionality concepts in moral judgment. He found that a higher percentage of Catholic school children made intentionality based judgments in response to the Piagetian stories which stressed obedience. However, there was no significant difference between the percentage of Catholic and public school children who voiced intentionality based judgments in response to revised stories where obedience was not stressed. Armsby (1971) suggested that "the greater emphasis on obedience and the authoritarian approach to education in the Catholic schools sensitized the Catholic school children to make judgments in terms of whether the child was obeying his mother or not (p. 1246)."

Summary and Discussion

A summary of the findings of the studies which have attempted to examine the effects of variables such as social class, intelligence, culture, child rearing practices, sex and age on moral judgment making will now be presented.

The three studies (Boehm, 1962a; Boehm and Nass, 1962; and Harrower, 1934) which have examined the effects of social class on moral judgment making report conflicting findings. Both Harrower (1934) and Boehm (1962a) report upper middle-class children to be more advanced in their moral judgments than lower or working class children. However, Boehm and Nass (1962) did not replicate these findings. The suggestion that lower class children evidence more mature moral judgments when exposed to middle class influences is plausible but has not been substantiated by research.

Contradictory findings were also reported with regards to effects of intellectual level on moral judgment making. Two studies (Boehm, 1962a; and Whiteman and Kozier, 1964) report that intellectually gifted students use subjective responsibility conceptions earlier and more often than children of average intelligence. Durkin (1959) however found no relationship between the acceptance of reciprocity as a justice principle and level of intelligence. Abel (1941) found that, among mental retardates, belief in retributive punishment decreased as mental age increased whereas belief in immanent justice appeared to be unaffected by increased mental age. Kohlberg (1969) found intelligence to be a factor in the moral judgments of the mentally handicapped but not in the judgments of the intellectually gifted group.

On the basis of these findings, it could be argued that level of intelligence is a factor in certain aspects of moral development but not in others. The studies just reviewed suggest that while intelectual level affects the ability to use subjective responsibility concepts, it does not affect views regarding immanent justice. Findings regarding the effects of intellectual level on the usage of retributive versus reciprocal punishments are mixed.

It would also be reasonable to argue that one cannot measure the effects of intellectual level on judgment making in isolation. Support for this argument is gained from the Boehm (1962b) study which reported a significant interaction between intellectual level, socioeconomic status and type of schooling (parochial versus public). She found that academically gifted upper middle class students in both types of schools scored higher at an earlier age than their counterparts of average intelligence or than working class students of either level of intelligence. Also, in public schools, academically gifted working class students responded more maturely than their counterparts of average intelligence. This pattern was not found in the parochial schools where differences due to levels of intelligence within the working class groups favored the child of average intelligence.

Cultural differences in moral judgment making were also noted. In a study of the moral judgments of American Indian children, Havighurst and Neugarten (1955) found an increase or no change in the belief in immanent justice among older subjects. In three of the six tribes studied, increased age correlated with the tendency to accept rules as changeable rather than fixed. Jahoda (1958) found a decrease in the belief in immanent justice with age among west-African children. Because the west-African children held moral views which were similar to children of so-called "modern" societies, Jahoda concluded that Piaget's views regarding cultural differences in moral development rest on simplistic, questionable assumptions.

Several studies (Abel, 1941; and MacRae, 1954) report on the effects of authoritarian child rearing practices on moral development. MacRae (1954) found no relationship between the type of parental authority his subjects were exposed to and their level of moral development. Abel (1941) found that the authoritarian environments of large custodial institutions had a limiting effect on growth towards autonomous thinking in mental retardates.

Studies which compare the moral judgments of parochial school students with those of public school students (Armsby, 1971; and Boehm, 1962b) revealed that the parochial school environment may sometimes have a positive effect on moral development. Boehm (1962b) found that Catholic school students mature earlier in their moral judgments than their counterparts in the public schools. Armsby (1971) found that Catholic school students made the more mature intentionality based judgments in response to the Piagetian stories which stressed obedience. When obedience factors were minimized, the parochial and public school students presented equal levels of moral maturity. The underlying assumption upon which these studies were based was that since the parochial school environment is more authoritarian, it is more likely to produce students retarded in moral development. In light of the obtained results, one should question this assumption. It is possible that other features of a religious education may promote moral development.

None of the studies reviewed up to this point reported sex differences in moral judgment making. A number of other studies (Berg-Cross, 1975; Berndt and Berndt, 1975; Chandler, Greenspan, and Barenboim, 1973; Gutkin, 1972; Hebble, 1971; Rybash, Sewall, Roodin and Sullivan, 1975; Savitsky, Czyzewski, Dubord and Kaminsky, 1975; Shaw and Sulzer, 1964) which will be reviewed in greater detail in later sections of this chapter also failed to find differences in the moral evaluations of males and females.

Several studies which will also be discussed in later sections of this chapter did however find sex differences in moral judgment making. Although Peterson, Peterson and Finley (1974) found no sex differences in the overall frequency of damage based or intention based judgments among preschoolers and second graders, they did find that adult males made significantly more damage based judgments than adult females. Leahy (1979) found that males (ages six and eleven) viewed the circumstances of duress and lack of chronicity as more mitigating in their evaluations of aggressive acts than did females. Also, Ferguson and Rule (1980) found that while the moral evaluations of children in Grades two and eight became less negative with age, this lessening of negativity was more pronounced for girls than boys. In summary, while the bulk of the research reports no sex differences in the moral evaluations of children and adults, a small number of studies have reported conflicting findings.

In most of the studies of moral judgment reviewed up to this point, developmental differences consistent with those predicted by Piagetian theory were noted (Abel, 1941; Boehm, 1962a; Boehm, 1962b; Boehm and Nass, 1962; Harrower, 1934; Jahoda, 1958; Johnson, 1962; Kohlberg, 1969; MacRae, 1954; and Whiteman and Kozier, 1964). Conflicting findings were noted in several studies examining the development of concepts of justice such as immanent justice (Havighurst and Beugarten, 1955; MacRae, 1954) and reciprocity (Durkin, 1959). Within the group of studies which specifically examined the transition from objective to subjective responsibility (Boehm, 1962a; Boehm, 1962b; Boehm and Nass, 1962; Johnson, 1962; MacRae, 1954; and Whiteman and Kozier, 1964) significant positive correlations between age and subjective responsibility were noted.

In summary, the studies which have attempted to examine the effects of variables such as social class, intelligence, culture, child rearing practices, sex and age on moral development present inconclusive findings. When one examines the studies which have specifically examined the objective to subjective responsibility transition, some more consistent patterns emerge. All of these studies report an increased preference for subjective responsibility with age. Also, subjective responsibility is consistently reported to be present in children of above average intelligence at an earlier age.

The Developmental Shift from Objective to Subjective Responsibility

The studies which have examined the developmental shift from objective to subjective responsibility have generally operationalized subjective responsibility in one of two ways. The majority of these studies have assessed the presence of subjective responsibility by examining the child's ability to make moral distinctions between intentional and accidental acts regardless of the outcome of the act. These studies have typically ignored an examination of the development of the child's awareness of the variety of motivations which might instigate intentional acts of harm.

A much smaller group of studies have assessed subjective responsibility in terms of the child's ability to make moral distinctions between differentially motivated intentional acts regardless of outcome. The present study which examines developmental differences in judgments of justified and unjustified transgressions falls within the parameters of this second body of research.

The research which examines the usage of intentionality (accidental/intentional distinction) stems directly from Piagetian theory. The research which assesses the child's awareness of differentially motivated intentional acts originates out of both Heider's and Piaget's theories. As was noted in an earlier section of this chapter, Piaget's conception of the objective to subjective responsibility transition is not as conceptually refined as Heider's in that it does not distinguish awareness of intentionality (accidental/intentional distinction) from awareness of motive (justifiable/unjustifiable distinction). For this reason, the present study relies on Heider's views regarding the attribution of responsibility as well as the Piagetian notion of objective and subjective responsibility for theoretical direction.

The following sections of this chapter will present a review of the research which has examined the developmental shift from objective to subjective responsibility. First, some of the research which has assessed the development of intentionality will be reviewed. Then some of the studies which have raised methodological issues pertaining to the assessment of objective and subjective responsibility will be reviewed and discussed. Then the studies which have examined developmental differences in judgments of differentially motivated intentional acts will be reviewed.

The Development of Intentionality

The studies which have examined developmental differences in the ability to distinguish accidental from intentional transgressions will now be reviewed. An analysis of the findings of these studies will reveal that the transition from consequence based to intention based moral judgment making is gradual and that between pure consequence based judgments and pure intention based judgments lies a stage in which judgments are based on both intentions and consequences.

Piaget (1948) hypothesized that children under the age of nine base their moral judgments on objective responsibility conceptions. That is, they base their evaluations on the external obvious characteristics of an act such as its consequences, the amount of damage done, or the particular label that can be given to the act (i.e. lying or stealing). Piaget hypothesized that there is an increasing emphasis on subjective responsibility with age so that by the age of nine the majority of children base their moral judgments on the internal or subjective processes in the actor such as his intentions or motives.

The story-pairs which Piaget utilized to assess objective and subjective responsibility typically contrasted an accidental act which resulted in high damage with an intended misdeed which resulted in low damage. Piaget presented these story-pairs to approximately 100 Genevan children ranging in age from six to ten years. The children were asked to judge which character in the story-pair was the naughtier. Piaget found that most six and seven year olds based their moral judgments completely on the objective outcomes of actions without taking into account whether or not the act was intentional. After the age of seven, a shift of emphasis began to take place so that by age nine the majority of the children based their judgments on the intentions of the actor rather than on the consequences of the act.

Piaget's findings with regards to the developmental shift from objective to subjective responsibility were replicated by a number of investigators prior to 1970 (Boehm, 1962a; Boehm, 1962b; Boehm and Nass, 1962; Grinder, 1964; Johnson, 1962; MacRae, 1954; and Whiteman and Kozier, 1964).

After 1970, many researchers (Berg-Cross, 1975; Buchanan and Thompson, 1973; Chandler et al., 1973; Costanzo, Coie, Grumet and Farnill, 1973; Hebble, 1971; and Imamoglu, 1975) who were also interested in the development of intentionality, criticized Piaget's assessment procedure because it confounded intentions with consequences. Imamoglu (1975) states:

> Because of this simultaneous covariation of these two parameters, it is impossible to decide whether young children are unable to

> discriminate between intentional and unintentional occurences, or whether they are unaware of the significance of intentions for moral judgments, or whether outcome is simply the more salient cue for them within the given research paradigm (p. 39).

Another question left unanswered because of this confounding was whether or not some children considered both intentions and consequences simultaneously when making moral judgments (Buchanan and Thompson, 1973).

Buchanan and Thompson (1973) employed a new methodology to assess intentionality. Twenty-four children in the first through the third grade were first classified as either objective or subjective on the basis of their responses to a traditional Piagetian story-pair. The children were then asked to evaluate the following four story types separately: high intent/low damage; high intent/high damage; low intent/low damage; and low intent/high damage. The investigators found that children who had been classified as moral objective in the traditional assessment continued to consider damage as the most important factor in their moral judgments. Likewise, intent information continued to be the most important consideration in the moral judgments of children who had been assessed as subjective in the

Piagetian story-pair paradigm. However, by including high intent/high damage and low intent/low damage story situations in the new assessment procedure, it became apparent that many moral objective children do pay attention to intent information when making moral judgments. A gradual change in the weightings given to damage and intent was noted with increased age. While the older children still considered damage information in their moral judgments, they placed a greater emphasis on intent information. The results of several studies (Berg-Cross, 1975; Hebble, 1971; and Imamoglu, 1975) employing a similar research methodology replicate the findings reported by Buchanan and Thompson (1973).

Gutkin (1972) introduced a second paradigm modification by devising six sets of story-pairs which represented all the possible pairings of the four single story types. Gutkin employed this new paradigm in a study of the moral judgments of seventy-two first, fifth and sixth grade students. His findings led him to propose a four stage developmental sequence in children's usage of intentionality concepts. At the least mature stage intentions were regarded as irrelevent. Story characters with varying intentions were judged as equally naughty when the damage they caused was equal. At stage two intentions were considered relevant but damage information was much more important. Children at this stage took intentions into account when damages were equal. However when damages and intentions varied the consequences were the sole basis for moral judgments. Children at the third stage considered intentions more important than damages but when intentions were held constant they still judged on the basis of damages. Thus damages were still relevant. For children at the last stage, intentions alone were relevant; damage information was ignored.

Keasey (1977b) using the revised story-pair paradigm found that both six and seven year olds used intentionality concepts more often when actions were attributed to themselves rather than to others (69% versus 40%). Seven year olds used intentionality concepts in both self-oriented and other-oriented story situations approximately two thirds of the time. These findings lend support to Piaget's observations that young children are much more likely to make intention based judgments when evaluating their own actions as compared to evaluating the acts of others. According to Piaget, the young egocentric child finds it easier to attend to his own internal psychological processes because they are directly experienced.

On the basis of the research reviewed up to this point, it can be concluded that the transition from consequence based to intention based moral judgment making is gradual in nature. Children in the six to nine age range generally evidence the usage of some subjective as well as objective responsibility conceptions.

Design Factors Affecting the Usage of Objective and Subjective Responsibility Conceptions

The unconfounding of intentions and consequences was not the only issue raised among contemporary investigators of the moral development process. A number of investigators have examined the effects of several other design factors such as mode of presentation, order of presentation and range of consequence severity on the moral judgments of children. These studies will now be reviewed.

A number of investigators have examined the effects of mode of presentation on the child's ability to make sophisticated moral judgments. Chandler et al. (1973) found that the majority of the seven year olds they tested were able to make intention based judgments when the action to be evaluated was presented in a videotape format. Actions presented in the traditional verbal format were still judged largely on the basis of consequences. Farnill (1974) who also employed the videotape format found that male kindergartners were able to make intention based judgments. Berndt and Berndt (1975) report findings which conflict with those just reported. They presented four, eight and eleven year olds with both stories and films of differentially motivated transgressive acts. They report that the story format did cause young children to focus on consequences, a finding consistent with those reported by Chandler et al. (1973). However, the stories had the opposite effect on the older subjects. The stories seemed to cause the older children to focus more on intentions. Keasey (1977a) suggests that the relative salience of intentions or consequences is perhaps the more crucial factor. He contends that the salience of intentions or consequences could be heightened in either medium.

Nummedal and Bass (1976) suggested that the order in which the intention and consequence components are presented within a particular story might affect whether or not the judgments are consequence or intention based. They argued that in the usual intention/consequence order, the younger child is more likely to attend to the consequence cue because it is more recent and therefore the more salient. To test this hypothesis they presented two groups of six, eight and ten year olds (forty-eight in each group) with sixteen stories representing either the standard order (intentions first) or the reversed order (consequences first). Their basic hypothesis was supported in that the six year olds in both conditions tended to base their judgments on the most recent cue. For the two older age groups, the intention/consequence condition elicited judgments that reflected a weighting of both intent and consequences whereas in the consequence/intention condition judgments were based primarily on intent.

The narrow range of consequence severity has been cited as a weakness of Piaget's original paradigm (Armsby, 1971; Berg-Cross, 1975). Armsby (1971) extended the range to include four levels of consequence severity. He found that when the difference in the damages resulting from accidental and intentional acts were minimal and equal (breaking one cup), 90% of six year olds made intention based moral judgments. However, as the damage that resulted from the accidental act became progressively more severe (breaking of fifteen cups, breaking of all the dishes, breaking of a new television set) the usage of intention based moral judgments among the six year olds decreased significantly. Only 60% of the six year olds made intention based judgments at the most severe damage level. The same trend though not as dramatic was noted among eight year olds. This vacillation between subjective and objective responsibility depending on consequence severity was not observed among ten year olds who continued to respond subjectively across all four conditions at least 92% of the time.

Costanzo et al. (1973) modified the Piagetian paradigm so that it included positive as well as negative outcomes. The effects of intent and consequences on the moral judgments of children in the five through eleven age range were measured. While the use of intention cues increased gradually with age for judgments of story characters who produce negative consequences, all age groups tended to make intention based judgments for the positive consequence stories. Costanzo et al. suggest that the differential responses of socializing agents to the positive and negative outcomes of children's acts might have been the underlying factor in these findings. When the child produces a positive outcome the parent's praise statement is more likely to include a comment on the child's intentions. However, when children produce negative outcomes, parents often give negative feedback in proportion to the amount of material damage produced.

Piaget (1948) also suggests that the extent to which parents center on the negative consequences of a child's actions may be a factor in the development of intentionality. He states:

> In so far as parents fail to grasp the situation and lose their tempers in proportion to the amount of damage done, in so far will the child begin by adopting this way of looking at things and apply literally the rules thus imposed even if they were only implicit (p. 126).

Several tentative conclusions can be drawn from the studies just reviewed. First, it seems that the videotape medium may be more effective in eliciting subjective responsibility in children as young as five and six. Second, the order in which the intention and consequence components of a story are presented appears to affect whether or not very young children (six year olds) make intention or consequence based judgments. It appears that six year olds tend to base their judgments on the more recent or salient cue. Third, six year olds and eight year olds (to a lesser degree) evidence more subjective responsibility when negative consequences are negligible than when they are severe. Finally, subjective responsibility appears to emerge earlier (as young as five) when consequences are positive rather than negative.

The Development of the Ability to Make Moral Distinctions Between Justified and Unjustified Transgressions

One of the main purposes of the present study was to examine the development of the ability to distinguish justified from unjustified transgressions. Within Heider's attribution hierarchy unjustified transgressions are acts of purposeful commission whereas justified transgressions are acts of justifiable commission. Heider (1958) clarifies his rationale for distinguishing justified commission from purposive commission in the following manner:

> The causal lines leading to the final outcome are still guided by P (person), and therefore the act fits into the structure of personal causality, but since the source of the motive

> is felt to be the coercion of the environment and not P himself, responsibility for the act is at least shared by the environment (p. 114).

In a similar vein, Kelly (1973) differentiates intrinsic or internal causes of behavior from extrinsic or external causes of behavior in his discussion of multiple sufficient causal schemes. He suggests that the presence of one or more facilitatory external causes such as provocation or duress leads to the discounting or minimization of internal causes such as personality traits or voluntary actions.

Thus, while a person is held fully responsible for a purposeful transgression for which no justification can be made, he may be partially or wholly excused for a transgression in which mitigating factors or extenuating circumstances are present. A review of the studies which have examined the development of the ability to make moral distinctions between justified and unjustified transgressions will now be presented.

Several studies (Darley, Klosson, and Zanna, 1978; Leahy, 1979; and Rule, Nesdale and McAra, 1974) demonstrate that when statements about the consequences of the transgressive act are excluded from the story presentation, children as young as five are able to distinguish justifiable from unjustifiable transgressions.

Darley et al. (1978) presented first grade students, fourth grade students and adults with various short vignettes in which one child always harmed another. Half of the subjects were presented with the information that the act occurred in the presence of a particular mitigating circumstance such as provocation, necessity or public duty. Half of the subjects were left under the impression that the act was purely malevolent. The results indicated that subjects of all ages (five through forty-four) recommended less severe punishments for acts of harm which occurred in the presence of justifying circumstances. No clear developmental trends were evident.

Leahy (1979) presented six year olds and eleven year olds with stories about hypothetical peers who were described as aggressing against the subject in the presence of various mitigating circumstances. He found that both age groups viewed provocation as a mitigating factor. Older subjects did however place more emphasis on justifying factors than did the younger subjects. The eleven year olds also considered duress and emotional maladjustment as mitigating factors. Leahy suggests that the reason young children are able to use provocation information in their moral judgments may lie with "their familiarity with the interpersonal dynamics of provocation, whereas they may be unfamiliar with emotional maladjustment as a constraint (p. 77)." Thus it is also possible that the cognitive structures of young children may reflect the recognition of certain justifications before others.

In order to examine whether young children use information about differing motives as a basis for their judgments of aggressive acts, Rule et al. (1974) conducted two studies in which children of various ages were asked to evaluate an aggressor whose motive was either hostile, personal-instrumental or prosocial. The participants of the first study were kindergarten, second and fifth grade girls. The second study included first, third and sixth grade boys. Both studies revealed that, regardless of age, the children viewed hostile and personal-instrumental reasons for aggressing as more wrong than prosocial reasons. The children in these studies seemed to feel that aggressive acts motivated by prosocial reasons could be justified.

The studies reviewed up to this point suggest that children as young as five and six are able to consider prosocial aggressive acts and acts of harm occurring in the presence of provocation, necessity and public duty as acts which are less wrong and therefore less deserving of punishment than acts of harm committed for purely malevolent (hostile or personal-instrumental) reasons.

Rule and Duker (1973) presented forty-eight eight year old and forty-eight twelve year old boys with stories about an actor who aggressed for either prosocial (to teach the victim not to transgress again) or hostile aggressive (to hurt the other person) reasons. The aggression resulted in mild or serious consequences to the victim. Both eight and twelve year old children judged the act more negatively when the aggressor attacked for hostile reasons. However, the eight year olds relied more heavily on the severity of the consequences in making their judgments than did the twelve year olds. Thus consequence information had much more of an impact at the younger age level. Both motives and consequences appeared to be important factors in the moral judgments of eight year olds.

Ferguson and Rule (1980) assessed the ability of 107 children in grades two and eight to make moral judgments of various aggressive acts. The following four of Heider's five responsibility levels were manipulated: a) extended commission; b) careless commission; c) purposeful commission; and d) justifiable commission. Level of outcome severity was also manipulated. Each story ended in a severe or mild outcome. The older children in this study differentiated among the responsibility levels more than did the younger children. They were much more sensitive to intent information (level four) and motive information (level five) than were the younger children. The younger children failed to differentiate between intended and justified aggression. Justified aggression in this study was operationalized as prosocial aggression in much the same manner as the previous research of Rule and her associates (Rule and Duker, 1973; Rule et al., 1974).

The children in the Ferguson and Rule (1980) study responded more immaturely than the children in the Rule et al. (1974) study. Thus when consequence information was absent (Rule et al., 1974) children in the five to eight age range were able to differentiate prosocial aggressive acts from malevolent aggressive acts. However, when consequence information was present and varied systematically (Ferguson and

Rule, 1980) children in the seven to eight age range were unable to differentiate prosocial aggressive acts from seemingly malevolent aggressive acts.

That the children in the Ferguson and Rule (1980) study responded more immaturely than the children in the Rule and Duker (1973) study also requires some comment. The authors state that the consequences in the 1973 study were probably perceived as milder than the consequences presented in the 1980 study. They report that in the 1980 study the younger children did not perceive a difference between the severe and supposedly non-severe consequences because both levels were perceived as relatively severe. Thus in the Ferguson and Rule (1980) study the perception of relatively severe consequences appears to have overidden the impact of motive information on the moral judgments of children in the seven to eight age range. Consequence information did not have this type of impact on the judgments of older children.

In summary, the studies just presented suggest that children below the age of nine are able to base their judgments on whether or not the transgression is justified or unjustified (Darley et al., 1978; Leahy, 1979; Rule and Duker, 1973; Rule et al., 1974;

and Shaw and Sulzer, 1964). Several studies also show that children below the age of nine also qualify their judgments on the basis of the outcome of the act whereas children over the age of nine do not. On the basis of these findings it seems reasonalble to conclude that the child's ability to differentiate justified from unjustified transgressions develops in much the same manner as the child's ability to distinguish accidental from deliberate acts of harm.

The Developmental Shift from Unilateral Respect for Adults to Mutual Respect for Adults and Peers

According to Piaget the child between the approximate ages of four and nine holds a unilateral respect for adults. Adults are viewed as omnipotent and their conduct and commands form the basis of the child's moral philosophy. Piaget (1948) states:

> The adult is part of the child's universe and the conduct and commands of the adult thus constitute the most important element in this World-Order which is the source of childish realism (p. 188).

Adult rules are viewed as transcendant and sacrosanct. Piaget (1948) expounds on this concept by stating the following:

> He (the adult) imposes rules that are regarded

> as sacred . . . when the adult is angry because the laws he has laid down are not observed, this anger is held to be just, because of the unilateral respect of which older people are the object and because of the sacred character of the law laid down (p. 230).

Piaget attributes this heteronomous emotional attitude to two cognitive deficits: egocentrism and realism. Egocentrism refers to the child's tendency to confuse his own perspective with that of others. Thus the child is incapable of realizing that moral values are relative to various persons or ends. Realism, the second cognitive deficit refers to the child's inability to distinguish subjective phenomena from objective things. Thus rules are viewed as fixed, eternal things rather than as psychosocial expectations (Kohlberg, 1963).

Unilateral heteronomous respect for adults characterizes the child's emotional bond with his parents. According to Piaget this respect is universal to all young children. It includes elements of fear as well as affection and thus provides a strong basis for moral realism. Piaget (1948) states:

> Without respect, the rules would not be accepted and the rules would have no power to compel the mind . . . It is a fact that the child in the presence of his parents had the spontaneous feeling of something greater than and superior to the self. This respect

> has its roots deep down in certain unborn feelings, and is due to a sui generis mixture of fear and affection which develops as a function of the child's relation to his adult environment (p. 377-79).

Piaget suggested that due to increased cognitive maturity, (i.e. the newly acquired ability to deal with situations from another's perspective), increased peer group cooperation and decreased adult constraint, children over ten reject the notion of the omnipotent adult. Mutual respect for adults and peers takes the place of unilateral respect for adults.

Piaget (1948) reports findings which suggest support for his hypothesis of a developmental transition from unilateral respect for adults to mutual respect for peers and adults. Piaget reports that a group of children, ages six through thirteen were asked "Is it just as bad to lie to one's companions as it is to grown-ups or is it different?" The results indicated that 81% of the subjects between the ages of six and nine thought it worse to lie to adults while 51% of those between the ages of ten and thirteen thought it equally bad to lie to children, and of those, 17% even thought it was worse to lie to a companion than an adult (Piaget, 1948, p. 308). These results appear to support Piaget's hypothesis that the younger moral objective children would consider it worse to lie to grown-ups while the older mutual respect-oriented children would consider it equally bad or even worse to lie to one's peers.

Most researchers who have investigated the notion of the young child's unilateral respect for adults (Dituri, 1977; Peterson et al., 1974; Rybash et al., 1975 and Suls and Kalle, 1978) have assumed that if young children do in fact view the adult as omnipotent and incapable of doing wrong, they should perceive adult transgressors as less blameworthy than child transgressors. Therefore, almost all of these studies have examined the notion of unilateral respect for adults by studying the effects of the age of the transgressor on the moral judgments of children of various ages. These studies will now be reviewed.

Peterson et al. (1974) presented preschoolers, second grade students and adults with story-pairs which contrasted a well-intentioned adult who caused high damage with an ill-intentioned child who cause low damage. By asking the children which story character was naughtier, these investigators induced a conflict between the child's unilateral respect for adults and his need to equate guilt with damage. The conflict was found to facilitate the ability of the second grade children to make the more mature intention based judgments. That second grade students made more intention based judgments when comparing a well-intentioned high-damage adult to an ill-intentioned low-damage child than when the ages of the characters were reversed indicates that their moral judgments were affected by the age of the transgressor. That second grade children tended to judge the adult as less naughty than the child is consistent with the Piagetian notion of the young child's unilateral respect for adults. Conflict had no effect on the judgments of preschoolers or adults.

Rybash et al., (1975) presented kindergarten children with a single story moral problem in which either a child or adult with positive intentions accidentally caused either high or low damage. While high damage transgressors were judged less favorably than low damage transgressors, age of the transgressor did not affect the children's moral judgments.

Suls and Kalle (1978) conducted a more extensive study of children's evaluations of child and adult transgressors. They presented kindergarten, first, third and fifth grade students with stories about children or adults who had either good intentions (wanting to help) or bad intentions (not wanting to help) and who subsequently caused either high damage (breaking all the dishes) or low damage (breaking no dishes). These investigators found no support for the Piagetian notion that adult transgressors would be judged less severely than child transgressors. In fact, contrary to the results of Peterson et al. (1974) and Rybash et al. (1975) these investigators report some findings which suggest that kindergarten students and first grade students may view adult transgression as more reprehensible than child transgression. While kindergarten students did not distinguish child actors according to damage, they rated adults who cause high damage more negatively than adults who caused low damage. First grade students rated the high-damage adult more negatively than the low damage child. Third and fifth grade students made no distinctions between child and adult transgressors. The authors suggest that because young children expect a high level of competance from adults, they evaluate adults more negatively when they cause damage.

Dituri (1977) examined whether ten year olds' judgments of peer behavior differed from their judgments of similar adult behavior. Sixty ten year olds were presented with story sets which consisted of one story about an adult as a wrongdoer and another story about a child as a wrongdoer. The characters in each story set had equal intentions (good or bad) and caused equal damage (high or low). The wrongdoing themes involved accidental damage, lying or stealing. The results demonstrate that children view peer behavior differently than adult behavior. In the lying and stealing story sets they felt both the child and the adult had done something wrong, but they felt that the adult's action was worse than that of the child. In the accidental damage story set half of the children considered the act wrong because of the damage incurred whereas the other half excused the action on the grounds of the actor's good intentions and the accidental nature of the act. In these story sets the child was viewed as a worse wrongdoer more often than the adult. The author explains these findings by suggesting that children are often scolded and punished for accidental damage and therefore, based on their own personal experiences, they assume that accidental damage caused by the clumsiness of children is wrong and necessitates punishment.

Dituri's findings with regards to ten year olds' judgments of peers and adults who lie and steal are comparable to the findings of Savitsky, Czyzewski, Dubord and Kaminsky (1975) who examined adults' judgments of child and adult transgressors. In the latter study adults also evaluated child transgressors less negatively than adult transgressors. The authors suggest that because adults view other adults as more capable of self-direction than children, they view adults as more accountable for their transgressions. Dituri reports findings which support this hypothesis. A common reason voiced by the ten year olds for choosing the adult as the worse wrong-doer was that the adult should have known better.

In summary, the findings of the studies which have examined the effects of transgressor age on the moral judgments of different aged children are somewhat inconclusive. While two of the studies (Peterson et al., 1974; and Rybash et al., 1975) found that the age of the transgressor did not affect the moral judgments of kindergarten students, one study (Suls and Kalle, 1978) found indications that kindergarten students might view adult transgressors as more reprehensible than child transgressors. While one study (Peterson et al., 1974) suggested support for the Piagetian notion of unilateral respect for adults among second grade students, another study (Suls and Kalle, 1978) reported that third grade students viewed the child and the adult transgressors as equally reprehensible. Finally, while one study (Dituri, 1977) reported that fifth grade students viewed the adult who lies and steals as more reprehensible than the child who engages in similar behavior, another study (Suls and Kalle, 1978) reported that fifth grade students viewed child and adult transgressors as equally reprehensible.

The inconclusive results may in part be due to several methodological flaws in the research design of these studies. Two of these studies (Dituri, 1977; and Peterson et al., 1974) failed to control for story content and sex of the story characters.

Also, none of these studies controlled for how children perceive the severity of the outcome of the transgressive act. Several studies (Rule and Duker, 1973; Ferguson and Rule, 1980) have shown that children at different age levels do perceive the same outcome differently.

It is also possible that factors such as social class, culture and religion may have contributed to these inconclusive findings. Dituri's (1977) sample was comprised of lower middle class ten year olds who attended an ethnically mixed parochial school. Peterson et al. (1974) report that most of the preschoolers in their sample were children of university faculty and attended a university playschool, whereas the second grade students came from the more heterogeneous public elementary school. The adults they studied were also university students. The kindergarten children studied by Rybash et al. (1975) were reported to be middle class. Suls and Kalle (1978) only report that their sample was drawn from a suburban elementary school.

Finally, all the studies examining the effect of transgressor age on the moral evaluations of children of various ages have utilized some test stories which do not clearly indicate the level of responsibility of the transgressor. As was noted earlier in this chapter, Heider (1958) proposed that a person may be held responsible for an outcome because of global association, extended commission, careless commission, purposeful commission or justified commission. In the studies just reviewed, it is often not clear to the reader whether the transgressive acts are accidental, or whether they are due to carelessness, or whether they are intended, or whether they are intended but can be justified because of extenuating circumstances. That is, the actual level of responsibility that should be attributed to the story character is ambiguous.

Related to the problem of failing to control for story content and level of responsibility is the problem of the particular story themes utilized by the various investigators. The majority of the stories in all of these studies describe transgressive acts which are largely caused by the clumsiness of the transgressor. The findings of Dituri (1977) suggest that moral realism may only be exhibited when the transgressive act involves clumsiness. That the child may have a double standard with regards to evaluating transgressive acts related to clumsiness is not unlikely when one considers the typical parental reaction to the clumsiness and awkwardness of growing children. Piaget (1948) states:

> Clumsiness plays, however unjustly, an enormously important part in a child's life, as he comes into conflict with his adult surrounding. At every moment, the child arouses the anger of those around him by breaking, soiling, or spoiling some object or other. Most of the time such anger is unjustifiable, but the child is naturally led to attach a meaning to it (p. 117).

In summary, most of the studies reviewed failed to control for a number of potentially confounding design factors such as story content, sex, level of responsibility and outcome severity. Differences in social class, culture and religion within and across the samples of the various studies may have further confounded the findings. It seems reasonable to assume that the conceptual ambiguity and the methodological flaws of the past studies may have contributed to their inconclusive findings.

Integration of the Literature Review with the Focus and Aims of the Present Study

The general aim of the present study was to reexamine the Piagetian hypotheses concerning: 1) the developmental shift from objective to subjective responsibility; and 2) the developmental shift from unilateral respect for adults to mutual respect for adults and peers. The validity of the first Piagetian hypothesis was tested by assessing age related changes in the child's ability to make moral distinctions between justified and unjustified transgressions. The validity of the second Piagetian hypothesis was tested by assessing whether or not transgressor age differentially affects the moral evaluations of children at two age levels.

More specifically these aims were met by presenting thirty-two second grade students and thirty-two sixth grade students with two short stories about a child or an adult who stole a low priced item of merchandise either out of necessity (justified transgression) or for purely selfish reasons (unjustified transgression). The age samples selected were assumed to be representative of Piaget's two main stages of moral development. The subjects were asked to evaluate the transgressive acts in a variety of ways. Explanations for the evaluations were solicited.

The design of the present study provided a more stringent test of the past research in that it controlled for a number of potentially confounding factors such as story content, sex, level of responsibility and outcome severity.

The present study controlled for story content by presenting the same thematic stories across all of the conditions. All of the stories had the same paragraph framework with function specific sentences. Because of the special problems connected with using stories about clumsiness , the present study employed stories in which the transgressive act was an act of theft.

The present study controlled for the possible effects of sex by presenting subjects with stories about same-sexed transgressors. That is, female subjects heard stories about female transgressors and male subjects heard stories about male transgressors.

Previous research indicates that information about consequence severity affects the moral judgments of younger children but not older children. Since the present study was not concerned with reexamining the effects of consequence information on moral judgment making, an attempt was made to mininize the possible effects of consequence information by implying that the transgressive act resulted in no negative consequences to the transgressor. The stories used in the present study imply that the transgressive act went totally unnoticed. Thus within the present study outcome severity was assumed to be negligible and constant across all story conditions.

Also, the review of the literature indicated that most of the previous studies examining these Piagetian hypotheses have utilized stories in which the level of responsibility which should be attributed to the transgressor is disputable. The present study employs hypothetical stories about transgressive acts which are clearly either justifiable or unjustifiable. That is, the acts of theft in the present study occur either out of dire necessity (justified) or for purely selfish reasons (unjustifiable). Using Heider's attribution hierarchy, the transgressors in the stories of the present study should be held responsible for their acts because of purposeful commission or justifiable commission. At the purposeful level, the transgressor is held totally responsible for his act whereas at the justifiable level responsibility is shared with the environment.

Research Hypotheses

The review of the research indicates that the transition from objective responsibility to subjective responsibility is gradual in nature. It appears that by the age of nine or ten children base their moral evaluations primarily on subjective responsibility conceptions whereas before the age of nine a mixture of objective and subjective responsibility conceptions are used.

Based on these findings, it was anticipated that the Grade two students in the present study would base their moral judgments on both objective and subjective responsibility conceptions whereas the sixth grade students would make moral judgments primarily on the basis of subjective responsibility conceptions.

Hypothesis 1 reflects the anticipation of the usage of subjective responsibility conceptions in the moral reasoning of the second grade students.

Hypothesis 1 Second grade subjects will judge unjustified transgressions as more reprehensible than justified transgressions.

Hypothesis 2 reflects the anticipation of the usage of subjective responsibility conceptions in the moral reasoning of sixth grade students.

Hypothesis 2 Sixth grade subjects will judge unjustified transgressions as more reprehensible than justified transgressions.

Hypotheses 3, 4, 5 and 6 reflect the anticipation of the greater usage of objective responsibility conceptions in the moral reasoning of second grade subjects as compared to sixth grade subjects. More specifically, hypotheses 3, 4 and 5 reflect the expectation that second grade subjects, as compared to sixth grade subjects, would find it more difficult to view the reprehensibility of an act of theft as relative to the motive underlying the act.

Hypothesis 6 reflects the anticipation of the greater usage of consequence information in the judgments of second grade subjects as compared to sixth grade subjects.

> Hypothesis 3 Second grade subjects will judge the justified transgressive acts as more reprehensible than will the sixth grade subjects.
>
> Hypothesis 4 Proportionately more sixth grade subjects than second grade subjects will make statements indicating a belief that the story characters who committed justified transgressions were wholly or partially coerced by circumstances into transgressing.
>
> Hypothesis 5 Proportionately more sixth grade subjects than second grade subjects will make explicit statements indicating a belief that the moral rule about not stealing can be compromised when a higher principle such as the right to survival is threatened.
>
> Hypothesis 6 Proportionately more second grade subjects than sixth grade subjects will refer to the possible consequences of the transgressive act when making their evaluations.

A review of the research examining the developmental shift from unilateral respect for adults to mutual respect for adults and peers indicates inconclusive findings. Based on the Piagetian notion of the young child's unilateral respect for adults, the following hypotheses were advanced.

Hypothesis 7 Second grade subjects will judge child transgressors as more reprehensible than adult transgressors.

Hypothesis 8 Second grade subjects' judgments of adult transgressors will be less negative than the sixth grade subjects' judgments of adult transgressors.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Subjects and Design

The subjects were thirty males and thirty-four females from a St. Albert Protestant Separate school located in a predominantly middle class area. The age samples selected were known to reveal developmental differences in moral judgments of transgressive acts (eg. Rule and Duker, 1973; Rule et al., 1974). The thirty-two younger children (grade two: sixteen boys and sixteen girls) ranged in age from 7.0 years to 9.0 years, with a mean age of 7.8 years. The thirty-two older children (grade six; fourteen boys and eighteen girls) ranged in age from 10.2 years to 12.8 years, with a mean age of 11.7 years.

The experimental design was a 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design including two grade levels of subjects (grade two students versus grade six students), two levels of responsibility (justified versus unjustified) and two age levels of the transgressor (child versus adult). A between subjects treatment design was used. Table 2 represents a summary of the design of the present study.

TABLE 2

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Grade 2				Grade 6			
J.T.		U.T.		J.T.		U.T.	
CHILD T. COND. 1	ADULT T. COND. 2	CHILD T. COND. 3	ADULT T. COND. 4	CHILD T. COND. 1	ADULT T. COND. 2	CHILD T. COND. 3	ADULT T. COND. 4

There were 8 subjects in each treatment condition.

J.T. = Justified Transgression

U.T. = Unjustified Transgression

Child T. = Child Transgressor

Adult T. = Adult Transgressor

Cond. = Condition

Materials

Each subject was assigned to one of the four treatment conditions (see Table 2). Each treatment condition was comprised of two very similar stories involving theft. In story 1 the story character stole a loaf of bread and in story 2 the story character stole a toque (knit hat). It was presumed that the subjects would perceive these two items of merchandise to be of equal value.

The hypothetical stories which were used in the present study were created by the examiner specifically for the present study. The results of a pilot study which had involved 8 Grade two students and 8 Grade six students suggested that the stories were easily comprehensible to the age groups interviewed in the present study. The results of the pilot study also suggested that the majority of the subjects in both age groups would perceive the two items of merchandise (loaf of bread, toque) and the two sets of precipitating circumstances (having cold ears, being very hungry) to be equal. Checks for memory, comprehension and the subjects' perceptions as to the comparability of the two transgressive acts were also conducted in the present study.

The two thematic stories had the same paragraph framework which contained the following five function specific sentences:

Sentence I Sentence I identified the story character and whether he was a peer or an adult.

Sentence II Sentence II described some of the circumstances surrounding the transgression.

Sentence III Sentence III identified the location of the transgression.

Sentence IV Sentence IV provided more information about the circumstances surrounding the transgression as well as a description of the actual transgression.

Sentence V Sentence V gave the conclusion to the transgression.

Both story themes were present in each condition. The story conditions differed according to the discriminating information of age of the transgressor and the presence or absence of justifying circumstances. Each subject heard stories about a same-sexed transgressor. The stories which comprise each of the four story conditions are presented in Appendix B.

Prior to the testing sessions, the stories were rated independently by two outside raters (both lawyers) as to whether or not the transgressive act depicted in each story should be judged as justifiable or unjustifiable. The raters agreed unanimously with the researcher's judgments as to which stories evidenced justifiable transgressions and which did not.

Procedure

Each child was randomly assigned to one of the four story conditions with the restriction that approximately the same number of boys and girls were assigned to each condition. The subjects were tested individually by the same female experimenter in all conditions. The testing took place in a quiet room in their educational institution.

The subjects were brought into the experimental setting by the examiner who introduced herself and then proceeded to give the following instructions:

> I want to find out what children your age think when you hear about people who act in certain ways. I'm going to read two short stories to you. After each story I'm going to ask you some questions. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers to most of the questions. I just want to know your opinions about what happens in these stories. Please listen carefully so you can answer the questions. Do you have any questions? O.K. Here's the first story. Remember to listen carefully.

After each story was read by the examiner two times, the child's memory and comprehension of the story was assessed by his/her response to the question "What was the story about?". If the child did not repeat the essential contents of the story the experimenter reminded him or her of the omitted points and then asked the child to repeat once more what the story was about. This procedure was to be continued until the child had correctly noted all of the main points of the story. Only three second grade students and one sixth grade student were unsuccessful in their first attempts at recalling the story. All were successful on their second attempt.

After the memory and comprehension check, the subjects were asked to respond to the following items (questions 1, 2, 3 after Story 1 and Story 2) using five-point scales: a) what they thought of the transgressor's actions (very bad, a little bit bad, not sure, a little bit good, very good), b) whether the transgressor should be blamed for the incident (definitely yes, probably yes, not sure, probably no, definitely no) and c) how much the transgressor should be punished (a lot, some, not sure, hardly any, none).

The subjects were then presented with several open-ended questions (questions 4, 5, and 6 after Story 1 and Story 2). These questions were designed to encourage the subjects to verbalize their perceptions of the transgressive incidents. These inquiries tested the subject's perceptions as to why the story character took the item of merchandise, whether the story character enjoyed his actions and whether the story character was compelled into transgressing. Subjects were encouraged to give reasons for their answers. All verbalizations were recorded verbatim.

After the subjects answered questions 1 through 6 for both stories, they were presented with the following items (questions 7, 8) to which they responded using five-point scales: a) what they thought their parents would think of the transgressors' actions and b) what they thought their friends would think of the transgressors' actions (very bad, a little bit bad, not sure, a little bit good, very good).

Finally, the subjects were presented with two questions (questions 9, 10) designed to tap whether or not the two stories were perceived as depicting transgressions of comparable severity.

Upon completion of the interview, the subjects were thanked for their participation and then debriefed. Appendix C presents the complete questionnaire and the debriefing procedure.

Limitations of the Present Methodology

The conclusions which can be drawn from the present study are limited to a certain degree by the particular methodology employed.

1) Previous research suggests that moral judgment making might be affected by socioeconomic status and that middle class children may be more advanced in their moral judgments than lower or working class children (Boehm, 1962a; Harrower, 1934). The sample of the present study included predominantly middle class children and therefore the generalizability of these findings are limited to populations of the same socioeconomic status.

2) Previous research suggests that intellectually gifted children use subjective responsibility conceptions in their moral reasoning earlier and more often than children of average intelligence (Boehm, 1962a; Whiteman and Kozier, 1964). In the present study no attempt was made to account for the possible differential effects of level of intelligence on moral reasoning. Therefore, it was impossible to ascertain whether level of intelligence tainted the results of the present study. Although the actual intellectual levels of the subjects in the present

study were unknown, it should be noted that all subjects demonstrated adequate memory and comprehension of the hypothetical test stories. Also, all subjects were enrolled in regular academic school programs.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Some of the major dependent measures were the subjects' judgments of the badness, blameworthiness and punishment deservedness of each of the transgressive acts (questions 1, 2 and 3 of Story 1 and Story 2). The subjects' responses to these six items were scored from 1 (highly negative evaluation) to 5 (highly positive evaluation). Pearson product-moment correlations revealed that the subjects' responses to these questions were significantly intercorrelated (all correlations were greater that .5, see Table 3). Therefore, the subjects' responses to these six questions were averaged to yield a single more stable measure of their perceptions of the reprehensibility of the transgressive acts. In the remainder of this paper this score will be referred to as the reprehensibility score.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted on the subjects' reprehensibility scores to assess whether or not judgments of reprehensibility were

TABLE 3

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN QUESTIONS 1, 2 AND 3 of STORIES 1 AND 2

	S1q1	S1q2	S1q3	S2q1	S2q2	S2q3
S1q1	1.0	.652	.621	.806	.524	.583
S1q2		1.0	.751	.559	.823	.779
S1q3			1.0	.543	.700	.935
S2q1				1.0	.526	.526
S2q2					1.0	.707
S2q3						1.0

All correlations are significant at the .001 level.

S1q1 = Story 1, question 1 (judgment of badness)
S1q2 = Story 1, question 2 (judgment of blame)
S1q3 = Story 1, question 3 (judgment of punishment)
S2q1 = Story 2, question 1 (judgment of badness)
S2q2 = Story 2, question 2 (judgment of blame)
S2q3 = Story 2, question 3 (judgment of punishment)

affected by the sex of the subject. The analysis revealed no significant differences between the reprehensibility scores of males and females $F(1,62) = 1.295$, $p > .05$. The mean evaluations were 1.661 and 1.586, for males and females respectively.

Several preliminary analyses were also conducted to assess the comparability of the subjects' responses to Story 1 and Story 2. A one-way analysis of variance on Story 1, question 1 versus Story 2, question 1 revealed that the transgressive act in Story 2 was perceived as less "bad" than the transgressive act in Story 1, (Ms = 1.344 versus 1.500) $F(1, 63) = 5.99$, $p < .05$.

A one-way analysis of variance of the subjects' responses to Story 1, question 2 versus Story 2, question 2 revealed no significant differences between the subjects' judgments of the blameworthiness of the two transgressive acts, (Ms = 1.672 versus 1.766) $F(1, 63) = 1.39$, $p > .05$.

A one-way analysis of variance of the subjects' responses to Story 1, question 3 versus Story 2, question 3 revealed that the subjects recommended significantly more severe punishments for the transgressive act in Story 1 (Ms = 1.781 versus 1.672) $F(1, 63) = 5.86$, $p < .05$.

Several Chi Square analyses were also conducted to evaluate whether there were any age differences in the subjects' perceptions of the comparability of the two hypothetical transgressive incidents. Subjects were asked whether they viewed the two acts of theft as equally bad, or whether one was perceived as worse than the other (question 9). Chi Square analysis revealed no significant differences between the two age groups perceptions of the comparability of the two transgressive acts ($\chi^2 = 1.05$, df = 2, $p > .05$). A breakdown of the subject' responses to question 9 is presented in Table 4.

Subjects were also asked whether they thought having cold ears or being very hungry were about the same or whether one of these occurences would be worse than the other (question 10). A Chi Square analysis of their responses revealed no significant differences between the perceptions of the two age groups with regards to question 10 ($\chi^2 = .100$, df = 2, $p > .05$). A breakdown of the subjects' responses to question 10 is presented in Table 5.

Summary and Discussion

To summarize, the preliminary analyses revealed significant correlations between the subjects' judgments

TABLE 4

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 9

	SAME	THEFT OF BREAD WORSE	THEFT OF TOQUE WORSE
Grade 2	28 (88%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)
Grade 6	27 (84%)	1 (3%)	4 (13%)

Question 9: In these stories one person took a toque and one person took a loaf of bread. Which of these is worse or are they about the same?

TABLE 5

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 10

	SAME	COLD EARS WORSE	HUNGER WORSE
Grade 2	23 (72%)	5 (16%)	4 (13%)
Grade 6	22 (69%)	4 (13%)	6 (19%)

Question 10: In these stories one person was very hungry and one person's ears were very cold. Which is worse or are they about the same?

of the badness, blameworthiness and punishment deservedness of the transgressive acts. On the basis of this finding it was decided that these measures would be pooled to yield a single more stable measure of the subjects' judgments as to the reprehensibility of the two transgressive acts.

Several contradictory results were obtained with regards to the subjects' perceptions of the comparability of the two stories. While a one-way analysis of variance on the subjects' ratings of the "badness or goodness" of the two transgressive acts revealed that stealing the toque was rated less negatively than stealing the loaf of bread, a direct question addressing this issue revealed that a high majority (88% of the Grade two subjects and 84% of the Grade six subjects) judged the two transgressive acts as equally bad.

Also, given that the subjects' rated stealing the toque as less negative than stealing the loaf of bread, it would be reasonable to anticipate that stealing the toque would also be viewed as less blameworthy and less deserving of punishment. However, this pattern of response did not emerge. The two transgressive acts were judged as equally blameworthy and more, rather than less severe punishments were recommended for stealing the toque.

Other evidence suggesting that the two stories were perceived by the subjects as being relatively comparable in content was that the majority of the subjects (72% of the Grade two students and 69% of the Grade six students) viewed the factors which precipitated the theft (having cold ears, being very hungry) as equally negative. The percentage of subjects who judged one or the other experience as being more negative was approximately equal.

Thus, on the one hand the data seem to suggest that the subjects viewed the two stories as presenting transgressive acts of equal reprehensibility and which were precipitated by equally negative circumstances while on the other hand the subjects rated one transgressor as less reprehensible but deserving of a more severe punishment.

Because the present study did not include in its procedure a counterbalancing of the order of the presentation of the two stories, it is possible that these somewhat contradictory results merely reflect a rather consistent pattern of vacillating between a harsher and a more lenient evaluation. That the intercorrelations between the various ratings were consistently highly significant gives credance to the notion that a pattern of becoming more and then less lenient existed. Had the stories been presented in a counterbalanced order, it would have been possible to be more definitive as to whether or not the fluctuation noted was due to a particular story or whether it could only be attributed to a change in thought processes upon having to give another evaluation of a similar story. Future research might address this issue.

In conclusion, it should be noted that no sex differences were found with regards to the subjects' reprehensibility scores.

Main Findings: Reprehensibility

The preliminary analysis revealed that the subjects' judgments of the badness, blameworthiness and punishment deservedness of each of the transgressive acts were highly intercorrelated. Therefore each subject's responses to these questions were averaged to yield a single more stable indicator of the subject's perception of the reprehensibility of the transgressive acts.

A three-way analysis of variance was conducted on the subjects' judgments of the reprehensibility of the transgressive acts. This analysis tested for main effects due to age of subject, level of responsibility and age of transgressor and interaction effects. Where significant interactions occurred, the Tukey test was used to test for significant differences between the treatment means. These analyses were used to test hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8.

Table 6 presents the analysis of variance summary table for the subjects' ratings of the reprehensibility of the transgressive acts.

The analysis of variance on the reprehensibility scores yielded several significant main effects. A significant main effect for age revealed that younger children judged the transgressive acts as more reprehensible than did the older children $F(1, 56) = 5.862$, $p < .05$. The mean evaluations were 1.427 and 1.818, respectively.

A significant age of subject x level of responsibility interaction qualified the main effect for age. This interaction showed that the differences in evaluation due to the different grade levels was greater in the justified transgression conditions

TABLE 6

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE FOR THE REPREHENSIBILITY SCORES

SOURCE OF VARIATION	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARES	F	P	DECISION
A Age of Subject	2.441	1	2.441	5.862	.019	Significant
B Level of Responsibility	9.897	1	9.897	23.764	.000	Significant
AB	3.917	1	3.917	9.406	.003	Significant
C Age of Transgressor	.157	1	.157	.376	.542	Not Significant
BC	1.129	1	1.129	2.711	.105	Not Significant
AC	1.510	1	1.510	3.627	.062	Not Significant
ABC	.417	1	.417	1.001	.321	Not Significant
ERROR	23.322	56	.416			

F(1, 56) = 9.406, $p < .01$. Since there were no significant differences between the Grade two and Grade six students' evaluations of unjustified transgressions (see Table 7), the main effect for age must be attributed to the fact that the Grade six students judged the justified transgressions less negatively than did the Grade two students. This finding that second grade subjects judged the justified transgressive acts as more reprehensible than did the sixth grade subjects caused hypothesis 3 to be accepted.

A significant main effect for level of responsibility revealed that justified transgressions were judged as less reprehensible than unjustified transgressions F(1,56) = 23.764, $p < .001$. The mean evaluations were 2.016 and 1.229, respectively.

The significant age of subject x level of responsibility interaction also qualified the main effect for level of responsibility. This interaction showed that the differences in evaluation due to the different levels of responsibility were greater for the older children F(1,56) = 9.406, $p < .01$. For Grade two students, the mean reprehensibility scores were 1.282 and 1.573 for the unjustified and justified transgressions, respectively whereas

TABLE 7

MEAN JUDGMENTS OF REPREHENSIBILITY AS A FUNCTION OF AGE OF SUBJECT AND LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY

	Justified	Unjustified
Grade 2	1.573_a	1.282_a
Grade 6	2.459_b	1.178_a

Cells sharing no common subscripts differ significantly ($p < .05$) using the Tukey test. A higher mean reflects lower perceived reprehensibility (minimum = 1, maximum = 5).

for the Grade six students, the mean reprehensibility scores were 1.282 and 2.459 for the unjustified and justified transgressions, respectively. A Tukey comparison test (see Table 7) revealed no significant differences between the mean reprehensibility scores of the Grade two students for justified and unjustified transgressions. Therefore hypothesis 1 was rejected. Grade six subjects did however judge unjustified transgressions as more reprehensible than justified transgressions. Therefore hypothesis 2 was accepted. Since the second grade students appeared unable to discriminate justified from unjustified transgressions, the main effect for level of responsibility was attributed solely to the Grade six students' abilities to discriminate justified from unjustified transgressions.

There were no significant effects with regards to age of the transgressor. Though the interaction between age of the subject and age of the transgressor fell short of the desired significance level of .05, a trend towards significance was noted $F(1, 56) = 3.627$, $p = .062$. For the purpose of testing the a priori hypotheses 7 and 8, several Tukey comparisons were conducted (see Table 8). A Tukey comparison

TABLE 8

MEAN JUDGMENTS OF REPREHENSIBILITY AS A FUNCTION OF AGE OF SUBJECT AND AGE OF TRANSGRESSOR

	Child Transgressor	Adult Transgressor
Grade 2	1.323_a	1.532_a
Grade 6	2.021_b	1.615_{ab}

Cells sharing no common subscripts differ significantly ($p < .05$) using the Tukey test. A higher mean reflects lower perceived reprehensibility minimum = 1, maximum = 5).

test revealed no significant differences between the Grade two students' mean reprehensibility ratings of child and adult transgressors causing hypothesis 7 to be rejected. Another Tukey comparison revealed no significant differences between the Grade two and the Grade six students' mean reprehensibility ratings of adult transgressors causing hypothesis 8 to be rejected as well.

Table 8 also reveals that the evaluation of child transgressors became less negative with increased age. This significant finding may have contributed to the trend towards a significant interaction between age of the subject and age of the transgressor.

Main Findings: Content Analysis

A systematic content analysis of the subjects' spontaneous comments as well as their responses to the open-ended questions examining their perceptions of why the story character took the item of merchandise, whether the story character enjoyed his actions and whether the story character was compelled into transgressing revealed some rather interesting patterns of findings. In order to examine the statistical significance of these findings, a number of Chi Square analyses were conducted. These analyses tested for relationships between the age of the subject and the presence of the following features in the subjects' verbatim responses:

a) reference to consequences when making judgments.

b) reference to the notion that the transgressor was wholly or partially coerced by circumstances into transgressing.

c) reference to the belief that the moral rule about not stealing can be compromised when a higher principle such as the right to survival is threatened.

d) reference to an alternative course of action that the transgressor could have taken rather than stealing.

The verbatim responses recorded on all of the protocols were examined for the analyses regarding features a and d whereas only the protocols of subjects in story conditions 1 and 2 (the justified transgression conditions) were included in the analyses regarding features b and c.

The analysis regarding feature a was used to test hypothesis 6. The analysis regarding feature b was used to test hypothesis 4. The analysis regarding feature c was used to test hypothesis 5.

In order to code one of the features just listed as present within the protocol of a particular subject, only one reference to it was required during the entire interview period. The frequency of the subjects' references to each of the features was not tabulated. In essence, the subjects' responses to Story 1 and Story 2 were combined for this analysis. A more detailed description of the coding and scoring procedures is presented in Appendix D.

An inter-rater reliability check was conducted by having a second person rescore a percentage of the test protocols. One-quarter of the protocols were randomly selected for rescoring with the restriction that each age group, each sex and each treatment condition was equally represented. An 88% agreement in scoring was achieved between the raters. After discussing the items in dispute, the two raters reached a consensus as to the proper scores that should have been administered.

Although the present study had been designed to mininize the salience of consequence information, many of the second grade subjects spontaneously referred to consequences when making their evaluations of one or more of the transgressive acts. These statements were found to be present in several forms. Some subjects evaluated an act as 'very bad' or 'bad' because of the punishment received (eg. "It was bad because he had to go to jail"). In a similar vein, some stated that the transgressor did not like what he did because of the punishment he received (eg. "Joe didn't like what he did because the store clerk gave him heck"). Others stated that the transgressor liked what he did because of a positive consequence (eg. "She liked taking the toque because it made her ears warm").

In order to test whether proportionately more second grade students that sixth grade students referred to consequences when making their evaluations, a Chi Square analysis was utilized. The relationship between age of the subject and the presence of consequence based judgments was significant ($\chi^2 = 10.57$, df = 1, $p < .05$). Thus proportionately more second grade subjects than sixth grade subjects made reference to the possible consequences of the transgressive act when making their evaluations (Table 9). Therefore, hypothesis 6 was accepted.

The test protocols of subjects in conditions 1

TABLE 9

FREQUENCY OF CONSEQUENCE BASED JUDGMENTS

	Reference to Consequences	No Reference to Consequences
Grade 2	22 (69%)	10 (31%)
Grade 6	9 (28%)	23 (72%)

and 2 were also analyzed as to whether or not they included statements indicating that the subject believed that the transgressor was wholly or partially coerced by circumstances into transgressing. Typical statements which indicated recognition of environmental coercion included the following: "She was very hungry and couldn't afford it; she could not help but take it"' and "She knew it was wrong but she had no choice".

In order to test whether proportionately more sixth grade students than second grade students made reference to environmental coercion, a Chi Square analysis was utilized (Table 10). The relationship between age of the subject and reference to environmental coercion was not significant ($\chi^2 = .79$, df = 1, $p > .05$). That is, reference to environmental coercion was independent of age of the subject. Therefore hypothesis 4 was rejected.

The test protocols of subjects in conditions 1 and 2 were also analyzed as to whether or not explicit reference was made to the belief that the moral rule about stealing could be compromised when a higher principle such as the right to survival is threatened. Examples of these types of statements included the

TABLE 10

FREQUENCY OF REFERENCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL COERCION

	Reference to Environmental Coercion	No Reference to Environmental Coercion
Grade 2	13 (81%)	3 (19%)
Grade 6	14 (88%)	2 (13%)

following: "Stealing is not bad all the time. If you don't have money, how are you going to eat and keep warm?"; and "What they did was good because it is more important to survive."' and "If it is really necessary it (stealing) is not wrong."

In order to test whether proportionately more sixth grade students than second grade students made reference to this belief, a Chi Square analysis was utilized. The relationship between age of the subject and reference to the belief that stealing might be acceptable if it ensures the safe-guarding of a higher principle was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.44$, df = 1, $p < .05$). A proportionately higher number of sixth grade subjects made reference to this compromise (Table 11). Therefore hypothesis 5 was accepted.

Summary of the Main Findings

The main purpose of the present study was to reexamine two theoretical notions regarding moral development proposed by Piaget. Piaget proposed the existence of 1) a developmental transition from objective to subjective responsibility and 2) a developmental transition from unilateral respect

TABLE 11

FREQUENCY OF REFERENCE TO THE BELIEF THAT THE MORAL RULE ABOUT NOT STEALING CAN BE COMPROMISED

	Reference to the Compromise	No Reference to the Compromise
Grade 2	1 (6%)	15 (94%)
Grade 6	7 (44%)	9 (56%)

for adults to mutual respect for adults and peers. The following is a list of the main findings of the present study. These findings pertain directly to the two Piagetian notions under investigation. A more thorough discussion of these findings will be presented in Chapter V.

Hypotheses 1 through 6 pertained to the developmental transition from objective to subjective responsibility. The findings with regards to these hypotheses will now be presented.

Hypothesis 1 Second grade subjects did not judge unjustified transgressions as more reprehensible than justified transgressions.

Hypothesis 2 Sixth grade subjects judged unjustified transgressions as more reprehensible than justified transgressions.

Hypothesis 3 Second grade subjects judged the justified transgressions as more reprehensible than did the sixth grade subjects.

Hypothesis 4 About the same proportion of sixth grade subjects as second grade subjects made statements indicating a belief that the story characters who committed justified transgressions were wholly or partially coerced by circumstances into transgressing.

Hypothesis 5 Proportionately more sixth grade subjects than second grade subjects made explicit statements indicating a belief that the moral rule about not stealing can be compromised when a higher principle such as the right to survival is threatened.

Hypothesis 6 Proportionately more second grade subjects than sixth grade subjects referred to the possible consequences of the transgressive acts when making their evaluations.

Hypotheses 7 and 8 pertained to the developmental transition from unilateral respect for adults to mutual respect for adults and peers.

Hypothesis 7 Second grade subjects did not judge child transgressors as more reprehensible than adult transgressors.

Hypothesis 8 Second grade subjects' judgments of adult transgressors were not less negative than the sixth grade subjects' judgments of adult transgressors.

Supplementary Findings

Because of the availability of the data and the possibility that it might be of interest to some readers, several additional analyses were performed. These analyses are presented separately because they did not directly address the main hypotheses under investigation.

Throughout the interview a number of subjects spontaneously made reference to an alternative course of action that the transgressor could have taken rather than stealing. Specific alternatives recommended included the following: ask the shopkeeper for the desired item; borrow the desired item; go on welfare; wait inside until it becomes warmer outside; and work for the shopkeeper to earn the item. A Chi Square analysis (Table 12) revealed that the relationship between age of subject and reference to alternative courses of action was not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.602$, $p > .05$). That is reference to alternative courses of action was independent of age of the subject.

Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted to examine the intercorrelatedness of the subjects' responses to Story 1, question 1; Story 2, question 1; question 7 and question 8. These correlations were examined for the purpose of assessing whether the subjects' evaluations of the transgressive acts were consistent with the evaluations they thought their parents and peers would make. Separate analyses

TABLE 12

FREQUENCY OF REFERENCE TO ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION

	Reference to Alternatives	No Reference to Alternatives
Grade 2	16 (50%)	16 (50%)
Grade 6	21 (66%)	11 (34%)

were conducted at each age level.

As is seen in Table 13, the sixth grade subjects' judgments correlated significantly with the judgments they thought their parents and peers would make, implying a consistency of response.

The same findings were not evident among second grade subjects. While the second grade subjects' own perceptions of the 'badness' of each of the transgressive acts were highly correlated, these perceptions did not correlate with the evaluations they thought their parents would make. Mixed results were obtained with regards to the consistency of the Grade two subjects' judgments with the evaluations they thought their peers would make.

These results contradict what might be expected from the moral realist described by Piaget. Piaget claimed that because of the cognitive deficit of egocentrism, the moral realist is incapable of realizing that moral values are relative to various persons or ends. Because he tends to confuse his own perspective with that of others, the moral realist believes all people hold views consistent with his own. Further research examining why second grade students do not anticipate adults and peers to advance moral evaluations similar to their own would be appropriate.

TABLE 13

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORESLATIONS BETWEEN QUESTION 1 OF STORIES 1 AND 2 AND QUESTIONS 7 AND 8

(n = 32)

GRADE 2	S1q1	S2q1	q7	q8
S1q1	1.0	.691*	.234	.432*
S2q1		1.0	.122	.321
q7			1.0	.385*
q8				1.0

(n = 32)

GRADE 6	S1q1	S2q1	q7	q8
S1q1	1.0	.912*	.949*	.495*
S2q1		1.0	.898*	.536*
q7			1.0	.445*
q8				1.0

*-significant at the .05 level

S1q1-story 1, question 1
S2q1-story 2, question 1
q7 -question 7
q8 -question 8

In summary, several supplementary findings were noted. First, 50% of the second grade subjects and 66% of the sixth grade subjects made reference to alternative courses of action that they felt were available to the transgressors. Reference to alternative courses of action was independent of age of the subject.

Second, while the sixth grade subjects' judgments correlated significantly with the evaluations they thought their parents and peers would make, a less consistent pattern emerged among the second grade subjects. The second grade subjects' own judgments did not correlate significantly with those they thought their parents would make. Mixed results were obtained with regards to the correlations between the Grade two subjects' own judgments and those they anticipated their peers would make.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The Developmental Shift from Objective to Subjective Responsibility

The present study examined the developmental transition from objective to subjective responsibility by assessing the ability of children at two age levels (Grade two and Grade six) to distinguish justified from unjustified transgressions. The present study revealed a number of developmental differences in the age groups studied which lend support to the Piagetian notion of a transition from objective to subjective responsibility with age. The following findings are supportive of this Piagetian hypothesis: 1) Grade two subjects judged justified and unjustified transgressions as equally reprehensible whereas Grade six subjects judged justified transgressions as less reprehensible than unjustified transgressions; 2) Grade two subjects judged justified transgressions as more reprehensible than did Grade six subjects; 3) Proportionately more sixth grade subjects than second grade subjects made reference to the notion that the moral rule about not stealing can be compromised when a higher principle such as the right to survival is threatened; and 4) Proportionately more second grade subjects than sixth grade subjects referred to the possible consequences of the transgressive acts when making their evaluations. Thus, as was expected, a developmental difference was noted.

While a developmental difference with regards to the usage of objective versus subjective responsibility was expected, the marked lack of the usage of subjective responsibility by the Grade two subjects was unexpected. That the Grade two subjects of the present study judged the justified and unjustified transgressions as equally reprehensible places them at the least mature stage in Gutkin's (1972) four stage developmental sequence regarding the objective to subjective responsibility transition. At this stage, intentions or motives are regarded as completely irrelevant to the moral judgment process.

In contrast with the findings of the present study, previous research (Darley et al., 1978; Leahy, 1979; Rule and Duker, 1973; Rule et al., 1974; and Shaw and Sulzer, 1964) has demonstrated that children below the age of nine are able to make moral distinctions between justified and unjustified transgressions. That the justified transgressive acts in the present study were essentially self-serving as opposed to altruistic, prosocial or "other-serving" may have contributed to the more immature judgments among the second grade students of the present study. Several of the studies which have found children of this age group able to morally distinguish justified and unjustified transgressions (Darley et al., 1978; Rule and Duker, 1973; and Rule et al., 1974) presented children with situations in which the story character transgressed or caused harm for altruistic or prosocial reasons or in response to provocation.

It is possible that the moral judgments of children below the age of nine reflect the recognition of certain justifications such as provocation and prosocial or altruistic motives before justifications such as personal necessity. This interpretation gains support from a study conducted by Leahy (1979). Leahy found that while six year olds were able to consider provocation as a justifying factor, they were unable to consider duress and emotional maladjustment as justifying factors. Further research is necessary to clarify this issue.

The immature responses of the second grade students in the present study may also be related to their perceptions of the severity of the outcome of the transgressive acts. Several previous studies (Armsby, 1971; Rule and Duker, 1973) have shown that information about consequence severity affects the moral judgments of younger children but not older children. Armsby (1971) demonstrated that as the consequences of a transgressive act became progressively more severe, the usage of subjective responsibility concepts in the moral judgments of six year olds decreased significantly. Two studies by Rule and her associates (Ferguson and Rule, 1980; and Rule and Duker, 1973) have revealed that when seven and eight year olds perceive the consequences of a transgressive act as very severe, they do not make motive based moral evaluations.

Although an attempt was made within the present study to minimize the possible effects of consequence information by leaving it out completely and by implying that the transgressive act resulted in no negative consequences to the transgressor, the second grade subjects still focussed a great deal of their attention upon the possible consequences of the acts. Many of the second grade subjects assumed that the transgressions would result in a very severe punishment such as a prison term. In light of the previous research, it appears reasonable to hypothesize that the minimal usage of subjective responsibility concepts among the second grade subjects may be related to a belief that the acts of theft resulted in very severe consequences to the transgressors. Further research could test this hypothesis.

Several findings of the present study suggest that some of the Grade two subjects may have been entering a transitional stage between objective and subjective responsibility. That 10 (31%) Grade 2 students did not voice consequence based judgments and that 13 (75%) of the Grade two subjects in the justified transgression conditions recognized the environmental coercion experienced by the transgressor suggests the possible beginnings of subjective responsibility among some second grade subjects. These indications of more mature moral reasoning did not however, appear to affect the mean reprehensibility ratings. It is possible that the second grade students who recognized that part of the motivation for the transgressive act found its source in the environment were reluctant to attribute part of the responsibility for the act to the environment and thereby judge the transgressor as less reprehensible. It is also possible that second grade subjects who did not spontaneously verbalize consequence based judgments still made consequence based evaluations. Further research is necessary to adequately examine these possibilities.

The Developmental Shift from Unilateral Respect for Adults to Mutual Respect for Adults and Peers

The present study also examined the Piagetian hypothesis concerning a developmental transition from unilateral respect for adults to mutual respect for adults and peers. This was accomplished by determining whether or not Grade two and Grade six subjects evaluated child and adult transgressors differently.

The study revealed several findings which question the validity of this notion in the age groups studied. Consistent with the findings of Suls and Kalle (1978) but contrary to the notion of unilateral respect for adults, the second grade subjects in the present study viewed child and adult transgressors as equally reprehensible. Another finding which calls into question the validity of the notion of unilateral respect for adults among children younger than nine is the finding that there were no significant differences between the Grade two subjects' and the Grade six subjects' judgments of the reprehensibility of adult transgressors.

The fact that the Grade two subjects did not distinguish child and adult transgressors but did evidence other aspects of moral realism such as objective responsibility calls into question the Piagetian notion that the source and basis of the young child's moral realism is his unilateral respect for adults. Although evidence of moral realism was present among the second grade subjects of the present study, evidence of unilateral respect for adults was absent. A similar phenomenon was noted by Rybash et al. (1975) in their examination of the moral reasoning of kindergartners. The moral judgments of the kindergartners in the Rybash et al. (1975) study were affected by the amount of damage caused by the transgressor, but were not affected by the age (child or adult) of the transgressor.

While the findings of the present study indicate that the age of the transgressor is irrelevent to the moral judgments of both second grade and sixth grade students, a trend towards a significant interaction between age of subject and age of transgressor was noted. That the Grade six subjects evaluated child transgressors less negatively than did the Grade two subjects may have contributed to this trend towards significance.

Although the Grade six subjects were more lenient than the Grade two subjects with regards to the evaluation of child transgressors, there were no significant differences between the two groups' judgments of adult transgressors. This pattern of findings seems to suggest that the Grade six subjects consider the age of the transgressor as a factor which can mitigate the reprehensibility rating. While it must be emphasized that, in the present study, there were no significant differences between the Grade six subjects judgments of child and adult transgressors, several other studies (Dituri, 1977; Savitsky et al., 1976) report results which support the notion that children over the age of nine and adults view child transgressors as less reprehensible than adult transgressors. Dituri (1977) reports that many ten year olds in his study viewed the adult as the worse wrongdoer because they felt the adult should have known better than to transgress. In a similar vein, Savitsky et al. (1976) suggest that since adults view other adults as more capable of self-direction than children, they also view adults as more accountable for their transgressions.

The idea that child transgressors should be judged as less reprehensible than adult transgressors is also embodied in Anglo-Saxon law. Fitzgerald (1962) points out that an act of harm which would ordinarily be punishable may be excused if it was executed by a child because in the court's view, it is questionable whether a child has the capacity to evidence the requisite level of mental culpability for conviction. The lesser ability of children to control their impulses and resist temptation is also considered as a factor which mitigates punishment and responsibility.

Further research is needed to explore whether the trend toward developmental differences in judgments of adult and child transgressors would reach significance in age groups other than those studied in the present study. It is possible that if the study was replicated with two age groups, one containing subjects younger than Grade two and the other containing subjects older than Grade six, that a significant age of subject x age of transgressor interaction would be noted.

In summary, consistent with the findings of Rybash et al. (1975) and Suls et al. (1978), but inconsistent with the Piagetian notion of unilateral respect for adults among children younger than nine, the present study found no significant differences between the judgments of adult and child transgressors. Thus the available evidence suggests that unilateral respect for adults among young children is not as pervasive as was suggested by Piaget. Perhaps Kohlberg's position with regards to the motivational basis of the young child's orientation to obedience and punishment is more plausible than the notion of unilateral respect posited by Piaget. Kohlberg attributed the child's punishment and obedience orientation to a realistic-hedonistic desire to avoid the shame and punishment of transgression.

Implications

The present study has significance for psychologists, educators, parents and all others who relate to children on a daily basis in that it presents a clearer picture of the changing ethical perspective of the growing child. It appears that Grade two and Grade six students do perceive and evaluate certain transgressive acts differently. More specifically, the present study revealed developmental differences in children's abilities to distinguish justified from unjustified transgressions. It appears that Grade two students are unable to make moral distinctions between an unjustifiable act of theft and an act of theft perpetrated out of personal necessity while sixth grade students are able to make this distinction. While second grade students appear to be aware of the publicly sanctioned concrete moral rules such as "one must not steal", they seem unable to employ a principled private morality which recognizes that environmental coercion lessens moral culpability and personal responsibility. This pattern of less mature moral reasoning among second grade students was also evident in their tendency to make objective responsibility or consequence based moral judgments. In contrast, sixth grade subjects evidenced a greater usage of principled moral evaluations which were sensitive to the subjective responsibility or the motives of the transgressor.

Some similarities between the moral perspectives of second and sixth grade students were also noted. Both second and sixth grade students perceived no significant differences between child and adult transgressors. The child's perception of adult versus child transgressors might be researched further by comparing the perceptions of North American children of today with the viewpoints of the European children studied by Piaget fifty years ago.

Since at present there is still much confusion and disagreement as to the nature, purpose, methods and scope of moral education, specific recommendations as to how these findings might be applied in educational programs and/or child rearing practices are considered premature. The implications of the findings of the present study may be different for persons with differing philosophical viewpoints as to the nature and purpose of morality. Therefore, an indepth study and consideration of the philosophical issues underlying the nature of morality must occur before specific recommendations can justifiably be made.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study provide a more detailed account of the unique moral perspectives of second and sixth grade students. Precisely how these findings might be utilized requires further study and thoughtful consideration.

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APPENDIX A

PARENTAL PERMISSION REQUEST FORM

April 21, 1981

Dear Parents:

My name is Alice Joosse and I am a graduate student in Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta. I am conducting research under the direction of Dr. W. Hague (Professor, U. of A., Dept. of Educational Psychology) into how different aged children view various types of transgressive acts.

I would like your permission to involve your child in a study of this topic. This project has been approved by the St. Albert Protestant/Separate School Board and the University Department of Educational Psychology.

Your child will be asked to listen to two short stories. Your child will then be asked ten questions regarding his/her opinions about what happened in the stories.

This study is designed to analyze whether children view peer and adult behavior differently and whether they discriminate between justified and unjustified transgressions. The results of the study will be forwarded to the school upon completion of the study. Your cooperation in this research would be greatly appreciated. Please sign and return this note as soon as possible if you will allow your child to participate. An immediate reply is important since the experimenter hopes to begin the study on April 23.

I ________________________, agree to have my child
____________ participate in this research.

Thank-you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alice Joosse
M.Ed. (Candidate)

APPENDIX B

THE TEST STORIES IN THE TREATMENT CONDITIONS

CONDITION I

Story 1

Betty (Bob) who is about your age is walking along the street. She (he) is feeling very hungry because she (he) hasn't eaten anything all day. Then Betty (Bob) goes into the bakery. Since she (he) is very poor and has no money she (he) waits till the baker's back is turned and takes a loaf of bread. Then she (he) runs out and starts eating the bread.

Story 2

Joan (Joe) who is about your age is walking along the street. Her (his) ears are starting to hurt because it is very cold outside and she (he) does not own a hat. Then she (he) goes into a clothing store. Since she (he) is very poor and has no money she (he) waits till the store owner's back is turned and takes a toque. Then she (he) runs out and puts the toque on her (his) head.

CONDITION II

Story 1

Mrs. Smith (Mr. Smith), who is about 35 years old, is walking along the street. She (he) is feeling very hungry because she hasn't eaten anything all day. Then Mrs. Smith (Mr. Smith) goes into the bakery. Since she (he) is very poor and has no money, she (he) waits until the baker's back is turned and takes a loaf of bread. Then she (he) runs out and starts eating the bread.

Story 2

Mrs. Jones (Mr. Jones), who is about 35 years old, is walking along the street. Her (his) ears are starting to hurt because it is very cold outside and she (he) does not own a hat. Then Mrs. Jones (Mr. Jones) goes into a clothing store. Since she (he) is very poor and has no money, she (he) waits till the store owner's back is turned and she (he) takes a toque. Then she (he) runs out and puts the toque on her (his) head.

CONDITION III

Story 1

Betty (Bob), who is about your age, is walking along the street. She (he) is feeling very hungry because she (he) hasn't eaten anything all day. Then she (he) goes into the bakery. Even though she (he) is rich and has a lot of money in her (his) pocket, she (he) waits until the baker's back is turned and takes a loaf of bread. Then she (he) runs out and starts eating the bread.

Story 2

Joan (Joe), who is about your age, is walking along the street. Her (his) ears are starting to hurt because it is very cold outside and she (he) does not own a toque. Then she (he) goes into a clothing store. Even though she (he) is rich and has a lot of money in her (his) pocket, she (he) waits until the store owner's back is turned and she (he) takes a toque. Then she (he) runs out and puts the toque on her (his) head.

CONDITION IV

Story 1

Mrs. Smith (Mr. Smith), who is about 35 years old, is walking along the street. She (he) is feeling very hungry because she (he) hasn't eaten anything all day. Then Mrs. Smith (Mr. Smith) goes into the bakery. Even though she (he) is rich and has a lot of money in her (his) pocket she (he) waits till the baker's back is turned and takes a loaf of bread. Then she (he) runs out and starts eating the bread.

Story 2

Mrs. Jones (Mr. Jones), who is about 35 years old, is walking along the street. Her (his) ears are starting to hurt because it is very cold outside and she (he) does not own a toque. Then Mrs. Jones (Mr. Jones) goes into a clothing store. Even though she (he) is rich and has a lot of money in her (his) pocket, she (he) waits till the store owner's back is turned and she (he) takes a toque. Then she (he) runs out and puts the toque on her (his) head.

APPENDIX C

THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE DEBRIEFING PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

I want to find out what children your age think when you hear about people who act in certain ways. I'm going to read two short stories to you. After each story I'm going to ask you some questions. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers to most of the questions. I just want to know your opinions about what happens in these stories. Please listen carefully so you can answer the questions. Do you have any questions?

O.K. Here's the first story. Remember to listen carefully.

MEMORY AND COMPREHENSION

Story 1

Story 2

STORY CONDITION 1, FEMALE SUBJECT, STORY 1

1. What do you think of what Betty did?

VERY BAD   A LITTLE BIT BAD   NOT SURE   A LITTLE BIT GOOD   VERY GOOD

2. Should Betty be blamed for taking the loaf of bread?

DEFINITELY YES   PROBABLY YES   NOT SURE   PROBABLY NO   DEFINITELY NO

3. How much punishment does Betty deserve?

A LOT   SOME   NOT SURE   HARDLY ANY   NONE

4. Why did Betty take the loaf of bread?

Any other reasons?

5. Do you think Betty liked what she did?

Why?

6. Do you think Betty acted the way she did because she had to?

Why?

STORY CONDITION 1, FEMALE SUBJECT, STORY 2

1. What do you think of what Joan did?

VERY BAD A LITTLE BIT BAD NOT SURE A LITTLE BIT GOOD VERY GOOD

2. Should Joan be blamed for taking the toque?

DEFINITELY YES PROBABLY YES NOT SURE PROBABLY NO DEFINITELY NO

3. How much punishment does Joan deserve?

A LOT SOME NOT SURE HARDLY ANY NONE

4. Why did Joan take the toque?

   Any other reasons?

5. Do you think Joan liked what she did?

   Why?

6. Do you think Joan acted the way she did because she had to?

   Why?

7. What would your parents think about what Joan and Betty did?

VERY BAD   A LITTLE BIT BAD   NOT SURE   A LITTLE BIT GOOD   VERY GOOD

Why?

8. What would your friends think about what Joan and Betty did?

VERY BAD   A LITTLE BIT BAD   NOT SURE   A LITTLE BIT GOOD   VERY GOOD

Why?

9. In these stories one person took a toque and one person took a loaf of bread. Which of these was worse or are they about the same?

A) TAKING THE TOQUE WAS WORSE.
B) TAKING THE LOAF OF BREAD WAS WORSE.
C) THEY ARE BOTH THE SAME

10. In these stories one person was very hungry and one person's ears were very cold. Which was worse or are they about the same?

A) BEING VERY HUNGRY WAS WORSE.
B) HAVING VERY COLD EARS WAS WORSE.
C) THEY ARE BOTH THE SAME.

You just heard two stories about two persons who stole something. I wanted to find out what you thought of this. Most people think stealing is bad. Do you agree?

I'd like to thank you very much for helping me today. I would also like to ask you to keep everything you did here today a secret until after school today. You can tell your Mom or your Dad but please don't talk to any of your friends about it until after school. Will you promise not to tell anyone but your Mom or Dad about it today?

Great. Thank-you again for helping.

APPENDIX D

THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECTS' VERBALIZATIONS

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECTS' VERBALIZATIONS

A content analysis was performed on the subjects' verbalizations throughout the entire interview. The purpose of this analysis was to examine for the presence or absence of the following features in the subjects' verbatim responses:

a) reference to consequences when making judgments.

b) statements indicating that the transgressor was wholly or partially coerced by circumstances into transgressing.

c) reference to the belief that the moral rule about not stealing can be compromised when a higher principle such as the right to survival is threatened.

d) reference to an alternative course of action that the transgressor could have taken rather than stealing.

The verbatim responses recorded on all of the protocols were examined for the analyses regarding features a and d whereas only the protocols of subjects in story conditions 1 and 3 (the Justified Transgression conditions) were included in the analyses regarding features b and c.

In order to code one of the features just listed as present within the protocol of a particular subject, only one reference to it was required during the entire interview period. The frequency of the subjects' references to each of the features was not tabulated. In essence, the subjects' responses to story 1 and story 2 were combined for this analysis. A more detailed description of the coding or scoring procedures for each feature will now be presented.

Feature A

Feature a examines for reference to consequences when making judgments. Feature a was coded as present when a judgment or evaluation was made in conjunction with a reference to an objective external outcome. References to both positive and negative outcomes were accepted. Examples of statements evidencing feature a are as follows:

1) "It was bad because he went to jail."
2) "He didn't like what he did because the store-clerk gave him heck."
3) "She like taking the toque because it made her ears warm."

Feature B

Feature b examines for reference to the notion that the transgressor was wholly or partially coerced into transgressing. Feature b was coded as present whenever the subject stated that the story character had little or no choice in transgressing. Examples of statements evidencing feature b are as follows:

1) "She couldn't help but take it."
2) "She had no choice."
3) any "yes" response to question 6.

Feature C

Feature c examines for reference to the belief that the moral rule about not stealing can be compromised when a higher principle such as the right to survival is threatened. In order for feature c to be coded as present, the subject had to make an explicit statement indicating that stealing is not wrong or less wrong when it is extremely necessary. Examples of statements evidencing feature c are as follows:

1) "What they did was good because it's more important to survive."
2) "If it's really necessary it (stealing) is not wrong."

Feature D

Feature d examines for reference to an alternative course of action that the transgressor could have taken rather than stealing. Examples of statements evidencing feature d are as follows:

1) "He should ask the shopkeeper for it.

2) "She should ask to borrow it."

3) "He could go on welfare."

4) "She could pay for it."